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In thy most need to go by thy side.

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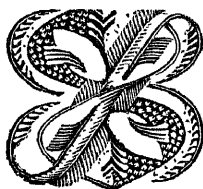
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POETRY & THE DRAMA

SHORTER POEMS
OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, son of an attorney, born in 1770 at Cockermouth, Cumberland. Educated at Hawkshead and St. John's College, Cambridge. Walking tour of Continent, 1790. Lived in Germany, 1798-9. Settled at Grasmere, 1799. Poet Laureate in 1843. Died in 1850 at Grasmere.

SHORTER POEMS



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

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INTRODUCTION

TIME goes on and the colours of our days change, but we return to Wordsworth as we turn again to Skiddaw and Helvellyn. There are certain subject swamps and dead-levels to be crossed before the real ascent begins ; but we are sure of our mountain rapture in the end, and his effect is not the less sure because of the huge prosaic substance of his base. Wordsworth was the mountain, as Coleridge was the magic valley, among the poets of their time ; and if we gain in one way, we assuredly lose in others, by paring him down as Matthew Arnold did into a pocket-Parnassus. We need not, as it is, explore all his waste of later sonnets and can avoid everywhere his obvious débris ; but even these help in some heavy substructural way to make up his British weight and mass and his final impressiveness.

By having Wordsworth in his extent, moreover, we are better able to realise him in his history, from the days when he mixed in the very ferment of the French Revolution to those when he retired from a world which "a vast meander is," to quote his favourite Countess of Winchilsea, and took up his retreat in his native Lake district. Thence he looked back with distrust at the smoke of the cities of the plain, and heard uneasily the distant rumbling of the cart-wheels of the English revolutionaries, which sounded in his ear, it may be, too much like the noise of the tumbrils that had carried the victims to the guillotine.

The French Revolution was not the cause of his going into his mountain retreat ; the real need for that was in the rugged Cumbrian constitution of the man himself. But in the story of Wordsworth the boundless imaginative expansion of his youth, when he was a hot recruit to the army of freedom, is the inevitable forerunner of the period of his contraction. You see how the one thing led on to, and seemed to require, the other, when you catch his note of exultation (in "The Prelude") over the death of Robespierre :

" ' Come now, ye golden times,'
Said I forth-pouring on those open sands
A hymn of triumph : ' as the morning comes
From out the bosom of the night, come ye :
Thus far our trust is verified ; behold !

They who with clumsy desperation brought
 A river of Blood, and preached that nothing else
 Could cleanse the Augean stable, by the might
 Of their own helper have been swept away ;
 Their madness stands declared and visible ;
 Elsewhere will safety now be sought and earth
 March firmly towards righteousness and peace.' "

The over-draft of the French Revolution upon Wordsworth's sympathies may be realised even better from a letter he wrote long after the days of "The Prelude," when he was a man past sixty (April 1, 1832). In this letter he said, after uttering his fears for England in her predicament at that time, which was not far from or very unlike the Hungry Forties : "I have witnessed one revolution in a foreign country, and I have not courage to think of facing another in my own."

Surely this marks a notable exhaustion of the spirit, and when you turn to the poems, early or late, that come after his French pilgrimage, you find the same note often resounding.

The spectacle of Revolution in France left an ineffaceable impression upon Wordsworth ; and the spectacle of the vanity and parade of his own land affected him no less. Read what he says in his sonnet to Milton, or in that sonnet of dismay before the idolatry of England, in which he laments with a lament that has become proverbial :

"Plain living and high thinking are no more."

If we read the sonnets and lyric poems of this time in the light of "The Prelude," as they ought to be read, we must see that to regard Wordsworth only as a poet of nature, and not as a poet too of men, an imaginative chronicler of himself, and a human actor in the events of his time, is to lose half the lights and shades of his poetry. We are too apt to take up some literary conception of a poet, and to forget that he lived in a day as real, as urgent in its affairs, politics, and prejudices, as ours seems to ourselves. And this is why it is good to have, as we have in Wordsworth's case, a critic like Coleridge, who was a fellow-poet, living in the same hour, steeped in the same current, studying under the same masters.

Coleridge brings us near the real Wordsworth, even when he is only discussing the excellences, it may be, of Wordsworth's poetic diction. He may be only speaking of the purity and sanity of Wordsworth's thought and style ; but he is sure to drop some covering phrase out of his personal knowledge which gives his words reality ; as when he says the poems are won not from books, but from the poet's

own observation: "They are fresh and have the dew upon them." By the side of this, place Hazlitt's tribute, for he too knew the poet, and has painted him and made for him a living portrait: Hazlitt's, who said, "the sense of a new style and a new spirit in poetry came over me. It had to me something of the effect that arises from the turning up of the fresh soil, or of the first welcome breath of spring." This comes from Hazlitt's recollections of his visit to Alfoxden, when Coleridge, seated on the trunk of an old ash-tree, "read aloud with a sonorous and musical voice the ballad of 'Betty Foy.'"

Hazlitt's portrait of Wordsworth, at this day, shows him as a figure rather "gaunt and Don-Quixote-like,"—even more gaunt than Coleridge had led him to expect. "He was quaintly dressed (according to the costume of that unconstrained period) in a brown fustian jacket and striped pantaloons. There was something of a roll, a lounge in his gait, not unlike his own Peter Bell. There was a severe, worn pressure of thought about his temples, a fire in his eye (as if he saw something in objects more than the outward appearance), an intense, high, narrow forehead, a Roman nose, cheeks furrowed by strong purpose and feeling, and a convulsive inclination to laughter about the mouth, a good deal at variance with the solemn, stately expression of the rest of his face. . . . He sat down and talked very naturally and freely, with a mixture of clear, gushing accents in his voice, a deep guttural intonation, and a strong tincture of the northern *burr*, like the crust on wine. . . . We went over to Alfoxden again the day following, and Wordsworth read us the story of 'Peter Bell' in the open air; and the comment upon it by his face and voice was very different from that of some later critics! Whatever might be thought of the poem, 'his face was as a book where men might read strange matters' and he announced the fate of his hero in prophetic tones. There is a *chant* in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which acts as a spell upon the hearer and disarms the judgment. Perhaps they have deceived themselves by making habitual use of this ambiguous accompaniment. Coleridge's manner is more full, animated, and varied; Wordsworth's more equable, sustained, and internal. The one might be termed more *dramatic*, the other more *lyrical*."

Hazlitt's visit fell about May, 1798, six years after Wordsworth's Revolution experiences, when the poet was twenty-eight years old. The winter (of 1798-9) at Goslar followed; and in the following December he settled with his sister at Dove Cottage, Grasmere. It is to Dorothy Wordsworth that we

must turn for our glimpses of the life there ; and with her account we may read, qualifying as we read, De Quincey's "Reminiscences of the Lakes and the Lake Poets." "The Prelude," it must not be overlooked, was begun during the winter in Germany ; and in that ideal autobiography we follow its writer through every stage, first of his advance into the world, and then of his return home to nature.

The small orchard behind Dove Cottage was the place where Wordsworth wrote many of the lyric poems of this time, and continued "The Prelude." Dorothy recalls the scene, when one evening in March 1802 she describes how she had walked beside Rydal lake with quiet thoughts. "The hills and the lake were still," she writes,— "the owls had not begun to hoot, and the little birds had given over singing. I looked before me and saw a red light upon Silver How, as if coming out of the vale below :

' There was a light of most strange birth,
A light that came out of the earth,
And spread along the dark hillside.'

Thus I was going on when I saw the shape of my beloved in the road at a little distance. We turned back to see the light, but it was fading—almost gone. The owls hooted when we sate on the wall at the foot of White Moss ; the sky broke more and more, and we saw the moon now and then, . . . when we came in sight of our own dear Grasmere, the vale looked fair and quiet in the moonshine, the church was there and all the cottages. There were huge, slow travelling clouds in the sky that threw large masses of shade upon some of the mountains. William kindled and began to write the poem. We carried cloaks into the orchard and sate a while there. I left him and he nearly finished the poem." . . .

And on a Thursday in April (the 15th) of the same year, we find this companion passage referring to his "The Daffodils" :

"It was a threatening misty morning, but mild. . . . When we were in the woods close to Gowbarrow Park we saw a few daffodils close to the water-side. We fancied that the sea had floated the seeds ashore, and that the little colony had so sprung up. But as we went along there were more, and yet more ; and, at last, under the boughs of the trees, we saw that there was a long belt of them along the shore, about the breadth of a country turnpike road. I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones about and above them ; some rested their heads upon these stones, as on a pillow, for weariness ; and the rest tossed and reeled and danced, and

seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind, that blew upon them over the lake ; they looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing. This wind blew directly over the lake to them. There was here and there a little knot, and a few stragglers higher up ; but they were so few as not to disturb the simplicity, unity and life of that one busy highway."

Some briefer passages dating from the May of 1802, referring to "The Leech Gatherer," also have great biographical interest because of the light they throw on Wordsworth's poetic "possession." They contradict the common assumption that he wrote with a tame, mechanic attention to his subject-matter ; not with the lyric passion, the "poetic madness," of which Socrates and Shelley speak :—

"*Wednesday, 5th May.* A very fine morning, rather cooler than yesterday. We planted three-fourths of the bower. I made bread. We sate in the orchard. The thrush sang all day, as he always sings. . . . W. had kept off work till near bed-time, when we returned from our walk. Then he began again, and went to bed very nervous."

"*Friday, 7th May.* William has slept uncommonly well, so, feeling himself strong, he fell to work at 'The Leech Gatherer' ; he wrote hard at it till dinner-time, then he gave over, tired to death—he had finished the poem."

"*Sunday morning, 9th May.* William worked at 'The Leech Gatherer' almost incessantly from morning till tea-time, . . . I was oppressed and sick at heart, for he wearied himself to death. After tea he wrote two stanzas."

It is worth note that after he is said to have finished the poem, we find him two days later still working at it, adding fresh stanzas, "wearying himself to death."

Coleridge still revolved around Dove Cottage in those days. Then, in October 1802, Wordsworth married ; and already then his friend and Dorothy's had begun to drift apart from them. What Coleridge had been to Wordsworth we know ; and what Wordsworth was to Coleridge, humanly and intellectually, we can read in an equally transparent mirror :

"And, sooth, these two were each to the other dear :
No livelier love in such a place could be :
There did they dwell—from earthly labour free,
As happy spirits as were ever seen."

And for the pity of their estrangement, is it not written in Wordsworth's "Complaint" ?

"Now, for that consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,

What have I? shall I dare to tell?
A comfortless and hidden well.

"A well of love—it may be deep—
I trust it is,—and never dry:
What matter? if the waters sleep
In silence and obscurity.
—Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor."

It is good to keep Coleridge in view, in realising Wordsworth; for he recalls Wordsworth's lyric youth and that human side of him which in our conception of him as a rigid Recluse, drawn from his later pictures, we are apt to forget. Coleridge reminds us too of the other men, Charles Lamb, Southey, De Quincey, among them, who made up the Wordsworth group; and Coleridge's testament, the "Biographia Literaria," is for allied reasons one of the most stimulating of all the Wordsworth documents. And if the famously stated "Six Excellences" of Wordsworth's poetry, as they may be drawn from the last chapter of the "Biographia," are restated in epitome here, it is that they may send readers anew to the creative prose of the one, and the creative verse of the other, poet:

"THE SIX EXCELLENCES."

"*The First*: 'An austere purity of language,—in short a perfect appropriateness of the words to the meaning.'

"*The Second*: 'A correspondent weight and sanity of the thoughts and sentiments; won not from books, but from the poet's own meditative observation. They are fresh, and have the dew upon them.'

"*The Third*: 'The sinewy strength and originality of single lines and paragraphs: the frequent *curiosa felicitas* of his diction.'

"*The Fourth*: 'The perfect truth of nature in his images and descriptions, as taken immediately from nature, and proving a long and genial intimacy with the very spirit which gives the physiognomic expression to all the works of nature.'

"*The Fifth*: 'A meditative pathos, a union of deep and subtle thought with sensibility.'

"*The Sixth*: 'The gift of Imagination, in the highest and strictest sense of the word. In the play of fancy, Wordsworth to my feelings, is not always graceful, and sometimes recondite . . . But in imaginative power, he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton; and yet in a kind perfectly unborrowed and his own.'"

Coleridge leading the way, we turn from the lyric poems of

Wordsworth's Grasmere days, or from the Matthew or the Lucy lyric-cycle, to "The Prelude," and enter thence "The Excursion," sure of the "imaginative power" he promises, sure too of our infinite human solace. It is a solace, quickened by a keener mountain feeling, like to that gained by turning from Grasmere Vale to the heights above. And it is only Wordsworth who gives us this rare delight in all its native northern sincerity. One has only to turn to what some people think his most prosaic poem, to "The Excursion," and read again the superb storm passage, in the fourth book, to be sure of it:

. . . "How divine,
The liberty, for frail, for mortal, man
To roam at large among unpeopled glens
And mountainous retirements, only trod
By devious footsteps; regions consecrate
To oldest time! and, reckless of the storm
That keeps the raven quiet in her nest,
Be as a presence or a motion—one
Among the many there; and while the mists
Flying, and rainy vapours, call out shapes
And phantoms from the crags and solid earth
As fast as a musician scatters sounds
Out of an instrument; and while the streams
(As at a first creation and in haste
To exercise their untried faculties)
Descending from the region of the clouds,
And starting from the hollows of the earth
More multitudinous every moment, rend
Their way before them—what a joy to roam
An equal among mightiest energies!"

With equal conviction one turns to that picture of the Joyful Tree, in the induction to the story of Ellen:

"A wide-spread elm
Stands in our valley, named THE JOYFUL TREE;
From dateless usage which our peasants hold
Of giving welcome to the first of May
By dances round its trunk.—And if the sky
Permit, like honours, dance and song, are paid
To the Twelfth Night, beneath the frosty stars
Or the clear moon."

This may recall the sketch by David Cox of the tree beside the river at Tintern Abbey, which also has for companion a tree in contrast, like that tall ash in the poem whence the thrush's song declares to unhappy Ellen how happy love might be.

Every man who has it in him to care for mountains, who has

ever been drawn by that mountain-spirit with which Wordsworth's best pages are instinct, will readily through Wordsworth's region make his own particular road. He will find upon his way the prose-writings of great help: especially the prefaces and notes to the poems and the guide to the Lakes which under that unpretentious form hides some of the poet's most radiant prose. Wordsworth's prose like his verse stands the test and wears well; and if individual proofs be still required of the enduring stuff of which his poems are made, and their power to sustain, console and rein courage men, it is enough to point again to John Stuart Mill's tribute; or, to take the latest biography published during the writing of these pages, to the "Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen." There indeed you will come upon this passage,—written after his first wife's death to Mr. C. Eliot Norton: "Do you sympathise with me when I say that the only writer whom I have been able to read with pleasure through this nightmare is Wordsworth? I used not to care for him specially; but now I love him."

* * * * *

In this edition of Wordsworth, the plan is roughly chronological. The shorter poems form the first volume; the longer, the second.

E. R.

The following is a list of Wordsworth's published works:—

An Evening Walk, An Epistle in Verses Addressed to a Young Lady, 1793; Descriptive Sketches: taken during a Pedestrian Tour in the Italian, Grison, Swiss, and Savoyard Alps, 1793; Lyrical Ballads, with a few other Poems, 1 vol. (four poems in this volume were by Coleridge), 1793; Lyrical Ballads, with other Poems, 2 vols., 1800: the first volume is a re-edition of 1798, with some alterations in text and titles, and in the order of the poems, and with the omission of one of Wordsworth's poems, and the addition of one by Coleridge—the second volume has fresh poems: this edition contains the famous Preface. Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems, with Appendix on Poetic Diction, 2 vols., 1802; republished in 1805 with slight alterations of text.

Poems, in two volumes, 1807; reprint, ed. T. Hutchinson, 1897; Concerning the Relations of Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal, to each other, and to the Common Enemy, At this Crisis, and specifically as affected by the Convention of Cintra, etc., 1809.

Essay upon Epitaphs, published in the "Friend," February, 1810 (reprinted in Notes to The Excursion). "A Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes, In the North of England," appeared as a Preface to "Select Views in Cumberland," by the Rev. J.

Wilkinson, 1810: it was annexed to the volume of poems published in 1820, and was finally issued, with additions, as "A Guide through the Lakes," 1835. The *Excursion*, being a Portion of the *Recluse*, 1810, 1820; Poems, including Lyrical Ballads and the Miscellaneous Pieces of the Author, with Additional Poems, etc. (a collected ed. of Wordsworth's Poems, omitting *The Excursion*), 1815; *The White Doe of Rylstone*, or *The Fate of the Nortons*, 1815; *A Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns*, 1816; *Thanksgiving Ode*, January 18, 1816; with other short pieces, chiefly referring to Recent Public Events, 1816; Two Addresses to the Freeholders of Westmoreland, 1818; *Peter Bell, A Tale in Verse* (with four Sonnets), 1819; 2nd edition, with slight alterations, 1819; *The Waggoner*, a Poem. To which are added Sonnets (dedicated to Charles Lamb), 1819; *The River Duddon*, a series of sonnets: *Vandracourt and Julia*: and other Poems, 1820; *Miscellaneous Poems*, 4 vols. (not including *The Excursion*), 1820; *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent* (contains one sonnet not reprinted by Wordsworth), 1822; *Ecclesiastical Sketches*, 1822; *Translation of First Book of Æneid* ("Philological Museum"), 1832; *Memorial Lines* written after the death of Charles Lamb, 1835, or 1836; *Yarrow Re-visited*, and other Poems, 1835, 1836, 1839. The Sonnets of William Wordsworth: collected in one volume, with a few additional ones, now first published, 1838; Poems, chiefly of Early and Late Years, including "The Borderers: A Tragedy," 1842 (these works were added as a seventh volume to the Moxon Edition of Poetical Works, 1842); *Kendal and Windermere Railway*: Two Letters reprinted from the *Morning Post*, revised, with additions, probably end of 1844; *Ode on the Installation of His Royal Highness Prince Albert*, as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, 1847; *The Prelude*, or *Growth of a Poet's Mind*: an Autobiographical Poem, 1850 (added as vol. viii. to Moxon's Edition of Poetical Works, 1851); *The Recluse*, first book published posthumously, in 1888.

Poetical Works: 5 vols., 1827; reprinted in Paris, one volume, 1828; 4 vols., 1832; 6 vols., 1836 (this Moxon edition was frequently reprinted; the 1840 edition had additional matter in vol. v.); the Notes dictated to Miss Fenwick were first published in 6 vol. edition of 1857. Later Editions: by Prof. Knight, 8 vols., 1882-6, 1896, etc.; in one volume with Preface by Mr. John Morley, 1888; Aldine Edition, by Prof. Dowden, 7 vols., 1892-3; Oxford Miniature Edition, by Mrs. T. Hutchinson, 5 vols., 1895; Edition with Critical Memoir by W. M. Rossetti, 1870, 1879.

Prose Works: *Dr. Grosart*, 1876; *Poetical and Prose Works*, with Dorothy Wordsworth's Journals, ed. Prof. Knight, 1896; *Selections*, Prof. Knight, 1893. New ed. *Guide to the Lakes* (Sélincourt) in Oxford Library, 1906.

Life: "Memoirs," by Christopher Wordsworth, 1851; "Life," 3 vols., Prof. Knight, 1889; F. W. Myers ("English Men of Letters"), 1881; A. J. Symington, "Biographical Sketch with Selections, etc.," 1881; J. M. Sutherland, "William Wordsworth: the Story of his Life," 1887, 1892; translation of É. Logouis, "The Early Life of William Wordsworth," 1897; "Wordsworth," by Walter Raleigh, 1903; "Wordsworth," by H. W. Garrod, 1923.

Poems and Extracts chosen by William Wordsworth, from the Countess of Winchilsea and others: (1819) first printed in "Oxford Library," 1906.

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WORDSWORTH'S SHORTER POEMS

"IF THOU INDEED DERIVE THY LIGHT FROM HEAVEN"

If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven,
Then, to the measure of that heaven-born light,
Shine, Poet ! in thy place, and be content :—
The stars pre-eminent in magnitude,
And they that from the zenith dart their beams,
(Visible though they be to half the earth,
Though half a sphere be conscious of their brightness)
Are yet of no diviner origin,
No purer essence, than the one that burns,
Like an untended watch-fire, on the ridge
Of some dark mountain ; or than those which seem
Humbly to hang, like twinkling winter lamps,
Among the branches of the leafless trees ;
All are the undying offspring of one Sire :
Then, to the measure of the light vouchsafed,
Shine, Poet ! in thy place, and be content.

"BLESSINGS BE WITH THEM, AND ETERNAL PRAISE"

BLESSINGS be with them—and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays !
Oh ! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

EXTRACT

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF A POEM, COMPOSED IN
ANTICIPATION OF LEAVING SCHOOL¹

DEAR native regions, I foretell,
From what I feel at this farewell,
That, wheresoe'er my steps may tend,
And whensoe'er my course shall end,

¹ Written at Hawkshead.

Calm is all Nature

If in that hour a single tie
Survive of local sympathy,
My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look alone on you.

Thus, while the Sun sinks down to rest
Far in the regions of the west,
Though to the vale no parting beam
Be given, not one memorial gleam,
A lingering light he fondly throws
On the dear hills where first he rose.

(1786)

"CALM IS ALL NATURE AS A RESTING WHEEL" ¹

CALM is all nature as a resting wheel.
The kine are couched upon the dewy grass ;
The horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is cropping audibly his later meal :
Dark is the ground ; a slumber seems to steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.
Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
Home-felt, and home-created, comes to heal
That grief for which the senses will supply
Fresh food ; for only then, when memory
Is hushed, am I at rest. My Friends ! restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my pain ;
Oh ! leave me to myself, nor let me feel
The officious touch that makes me droop again.

"ON NATURE'S INVITATION DO I COME" ²

ON Nature's invitation do I come,
By Reason sanctioned. Can the choice mislead,
That made the calmest, fairest spot on earth,
With all its unappropriated good,
My own ; and not mine only, for with me
Entrenched—say rather peacefully embowered—
Under yon orchard, in yon humble cot,
A younger orphan of a Home extinct,
The only daughter of my parents dwells :
Aye, think on that, my heart, and cease to stir ;
Pause upon that, and let the breathing frame

¹ Written in very early youth.

² From *The Recluse*.

Bleak Season was it

No longer breathe, but all be satisfied.
Oh, if such silence be not thanks to God,
For what hath been bestowed, then where, where then
Shall gratitude find rest? Mine eyes did ne'er
Fix on a lovely object, nor my mind
Take pleasure in the midst of happy thoughts,
But either she, whom now I have, who now
Divides with me this loved abode, was there,
Or not far off. Where'er my footsteps turned,
Her voice was like a hidden Bird that sang ;
The thought of her was like a flash of light
Or an unseen companionship, a breath
Or fragrance independent of the wind.
In all my goings, in the new and old
Of all my meditations, and in this
Favourite of all, in this the most of all. . . .
Embrace me then, ye hills, and close me in.
Now in the clear and open day I feel
Your guardianship : I take it to my heart ;
'Tis like the solemn shelter of the night.
But I would call thee beautiful ; for mild,
And soft, and gay, and beautiful thou art,
Dear valley, having in thy face a smile,
Though peaceful, full of gladness. Thou art pleased,
Pleased with thy crags, and woody steep, thy Lake,
Its one green Island, and its winding shores,
The multitude of little rocky hills,
Thy Church, and cottages of mountain-stone
Clustered like stars some few, but single most,
And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
Or glancing at each other cheerful looks,
Like separated stars with clouds between.

"BLEAK SEASON WAS IT, TURBULENT AND WILD" ¹

BLEAK season was it, turbulent and wild,
When hitherward we journeyed, side by side,
Through bursts of sunshine and through flying showers,
Paced the long Vales, how long they were, and yet
How fast that length of way was left behind,
Wensley's rich Vale and Sedbergh's naked heights.
The frosty wind, as if to make amends
For its keen breath, was aiding to our steps,

From *The Recluse*.

Remembrance of Collins

And drove us onward as two ships at sea ;
Or, like two birds, companions in mid air,
Parted and reunited by the blast.
Stern was the face of nature ; we rejoiced
In that stern countenance ; for our souls thence drew
A feeling of their strength. The naked trees,
The icy brooks, as on we passed, appeared
To question us, " Whence come ye ? To what end ? "

LINES

WRITTEN WHILE SAILING IN A BOAT AT EVENING

How richly glows the water's breast
Before us, tinged with evening hues,
While, facing thus the crimson west,
The boat her silent course pursues !
And see how dark the backward stream !
A little moment past so smiling !
And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam,
Some other loiterers beguiling.

Such views the youthful Bard allure ;
But, heedless of the following gloom,
He deems their colours shall endure
Till peace go with him to the tomb.
—And let him nurse his fond deceit,
And what if he must die in sorrow !
Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
Though grief and pain may come to-morrow ?
(1789)

REMEMBRANCE OF COLLINS

COMPOSED UPON THE THAMES NEAR RICHMOND

GLIDE gently, thus for ever glide,
O Thames ! that other bards may see
As lovely visions by thy side
As now, fair river ! come to me.
O glide, fair stream ! for ever so,
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
Till all our minds for ever flow
As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Vain thought !—Yet be as now thou art,

Lines left upon a Seat

That in thy waters may be seen
The image of a poet's heart,
How bright; how solemn, how serene!
Such as did once the Poet bless,
Who murmuring here a later¹ ditty,
Could find no refuge from distress
But in the milder grief of pity.

Now let us, as we float along,
For *him* suspend the dashing oar;
And pray that never child of song
May know that Poet's sorrows more.
How calm! how still! the only sound,
The dripping of the oar suspended!
—The evening darkness gathers round
By virtue's holiest Powers attended.

(1789)

LINES LEFT UPON A SEAT IN A YEW-TREE

WHICH STANDS NEAR THE LAKE OF ESTHWAITE, ON A
DESOLATE PART OF THE SHORE, COMMANDING A
BEAUTIFUL PROSPECT²

NAY, Traveller! rest. This lonely Yew-tree stands
Far from all human dwelling: what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb?
What if the bee love not these barren boughs?
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

—————Who he was
That piled these stones and with the mossy sod
First covered, and here taught this aged Tree
With its dark arms to form a circling bower,
I well remember.—He was one who owned
No common soul. In youth by science nursed,
And led by nature into a wild scene

¹ Collins's Ode on the death of Thomson, the last written, I believe, of the poems which were published during his life-time. This Ode is also alluded to in the next stanza.

² Composed in part at school at Hawkshead. The tree has disappeared, and the slip of Common on which it stood, that ran parallel to the lake and lay open to it, has long been enclosed; so that the road has lost much of its attraction. This spot was my favourite walk in the evenings during the latter part of my school-time.

Lines left upon a Seat

Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth
 A favoured Being, knowing no desire
 Which genius did not hallow ; 'gainst the taint
 Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate,
 And scorn,—against all enemies prepared,
 All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,
 Owed him no service ; wherefore he at once
 With indignation turned himself away,
 And with the food of pride sustained his soul
 In solitude.—Stranger ! these gloomy boughs
 Had charms for him ; and here he loved to sit,
 His only visitants a straggling sheep,
 The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper :
 And on these barren rocks, with fern and heath,
 And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
 Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour
 A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
 An emblem of his own unfruitful life :
 And, lifting up his head, he then would gaze
 On the more distant scene,—how lovely 'tis
 Thou seest,—and he would gaze till it became
 Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
 The beauty, still more beauteous ! Nor, that time,
 When nature had subdued him to herself,
 Would he forget those Beings to whose minds,
 Warm from the labours of benevolence,
 The world, and human life, appeared a scene
 Of kindred loveliness : then he would sigh,
 Inly disturbed, to think that others felt
 What he must never feel : and so, lost Man !
 On visionary views would fancy feed,
 Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
 He died,—this seat his only monument.

If Thou be one whose heart the holy forms
 Of young imagination have kept pure,
 Stranger ! henceforth be warned ; and know that pride,
 Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
 Is littleness ; that he, who feels contempt
 For any living thing, hath found himself
 Which he has brought with him
 Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
 Is ever on himself doth look, on one,
 The least of Nature's works, one who might move
 The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
 Unlawful, ever. O be wiser, Thou !

The Reverie of Poor Susan

Instructed that true knowledge leads to love ;
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.
(1795)

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN¹

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the Bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment ; what ails her ? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees ;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail ;
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven : but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade :
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes !
(1797)

A NIGHT-PIECE²

-THE sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon,
Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,
A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread, that not a shadow falls,
Chequering the ground—from rock, plant, tree, or tower.
At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller while he treads
His lonesome path, with unobserving eye

¹ This arose out of my observation of the birds hanging in this way in the London streets stillness of the Spring morning.

² Composed on the road between Nether Stowey and Alfoxden.

Bent earthwards ; he looks up—the clouds are split
 Asunder,—and above his head he sees
 The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.
 There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
 Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small
 And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss
 Drive as she drives : how fast they wheel away,
 Yet vanish not !—the wind is in the tree,
 But they are silent ;—still they roll along
 Immeasurably distant ; and the vault,
 Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
 Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
 At length the Vision closes ; and the mind,
 Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,
 Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
 Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.
 (1798)

WE ARE SEVEN¹

A SIMPLE Child,
 That lightly draws its breath,
 And feels its life in every limb,
 What should it know of death ?

I met a little cottage Girl :
 She was eight years old, she said ;
 Her hair was thick with many a curl
 That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
 And she was wildly clad :
 Her eyes were fair, and very fair ;
 —Her beauty made me glad.

“ Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
 How many may you be ? ”
 “ How many ? Seven in all,” she said
 And wondering looked at me.

“ And where are they ? I pray you tell.”
 She answered, “ Seven are we ;
 And two of us at Conway dwell,
 And two are gone to sea.

¹ Written at Alfoxden in the spring of 1798. The little girl who is the heroine I met within the area of Goodrich Castle in the year 1793.

We are Seven

"Two of us in the churchyard lie,
My sister and my brother ;
And, in the churchyard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven !—I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be."

Then did the little Maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we ;
Two of us in the churchyard lie,
Beneath the churchyard tree."

"You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive ;
If two are in the churchyard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little Maid replied,
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side."

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem ;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them."

"And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there."

"The first that died was sister Jane ;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain ;
And then she went away."

"So in the churchyard she was laid ;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I."

"And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

Anecdote for Fathers

"How many are you then," said I,
 "If they two are in heaven?"
 Quick was the little Maid's reply,
 "O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
 Their spirits are in heaven!"
 'Twas throwing words away; for still
 The little Maid would have her will,
 And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

(1798)

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS¹

"Retine vim istam, falsa enim dicam, si coges."—EUSEBIUS.

I HAVE a boy of five years old;
 His face is fair and fresh to see;
 His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,
 And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
 Our quiet home all full in view,
 And held such intermitted talk
 As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;
 I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
 Our pleasant home when spring began,
 A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
 Some fond regrets to entertain;
 With so much happiness to spare,
 I could not feel a pain.

The green earth echoed to the feet
 Of lambs that bounded through the glade,
 From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
 From sunshine back to shade.

Birds warbled round me—and each trace
 Of inward sadness had its charm;
 Kilve, thought I, was a favoured place,
 And so is Liswyn farm.

¹ Alfoxden. The Boy was a son of my friend, Basil Montagu, who had been two or three years under our care. The name of Kilve is from a village on the Bristol Channel, about a mile from Alfoxden; and the name of Liswyn Farm was taken from a beautiful spot on the Wye.

Anecdote for Fathers

11

My boy beside me tripped, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress !
And, as we talked, I questioned him
In very idleness.

"Now tell me, had you rather be,"
I said, and took him by the arm,
"On Kilve's smooth shore, by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm ?"

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, "At Kilve I'd rather be
Than here at Liswyn farm."

"Now, little Edward, say why so :
My little Edward, tell me why."—
"I cannot tell, I do not know."—
"Why, this is strange," said I ;

"For, here are woods, hills smooth and warm :
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea."

At this, my boy hung down his head,
He blushed with shame, nor made reply ;
And three times to the child I said,
"Why, Edward, tell me why ?"

His head he raised—there was in sight,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain—
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
And eased his mind with this reply :
"At Kilve there was no weather-cock ;
And that's the reason why."

O dearest, dearest boy ! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.

THE THORN

“THERE is a Thorn—it looks so old,
In truth, you’d find it hard to say
How it could ever have been young,
It looks so old and grey.
Not higher than a two years’ child
It stands erect, this aged Thorn ;
No leaves it has, no prickly points ;
It is a mass of knotted joints,
A wretched thing forlorn.
It stands erect, and like a stone
With lichens is it overgrown.

“Like rock or stone, it is o’ergrown,
With lichens to the very top,
And hung with heavy tufts of moss,
A melancholy crop :
Up from the earth these mosses creep,
And this poor Thorn they clasp it round
So close, you’d say that they are bent
With plain and manifest intent
To drag it to the ground ;
And all have joined in one endeavour
To bury this poor Thorn for ever.

III

“High on a mountain’s highest ridge,
Where oft the stormy winter gale
Cuts like a scythe, while through the clouds
It sweeps from vale to vale ;
Not five yards from the mountain path,
This Thorn you on your left espy ;
And to the left, three yards beyond,
You see a little muddy pond
Of water—never dry
Though but of compass small, and bare
To thirsty suns and parching air.

¹ Written at Alfoxden.

The Thorn

IV

“And, close beside this aged Thorn,
There is a fresh and lovely sight,
A beauteous heap, a hill of moss,
Just half a foot in height.
All lovely colours there you see,
All colours that were ever seen ;
And mossy network too is there,
As if by hand of lady fair
The work had woven been ;
And cups, the darlings of the eye,
So deep is their vermilion dye.

“Ah me ! what lovely tints are there
Of olive green and scarlet bright,
In spikes, in branches, and in stars,
Green, red, and pearly white !
This heap of earth o’ergrown with moss,
Which close beside the Thorn you see,
So fresh in all its beauteous dyes,
Is like an infant’s grave in size,
As like as like can be :
But never, never any where,
An infant’s grave was half so fair.

VI

“Now would you see this aged Thorn,
This pond, and beauteous hill of moss,
You must take care and choose your time
The mountain when to cross.
For oft there sits between the heap
So like an infant’s grave in size,
And that same pond of which I spoke,
A Woman in a scarlet cloak,
And to herself she cries,
‘Oh misery ! oh misery !
Oh woe is me ! oh misery !’

VII

“At all times of the day and night
This wretched Woman thither goes ;
And she is known to every star,
And every wind that blows ;
And there, beside the Thorn, she sits

The Thorn

When the blue daylight's in the skies,
 And when the whirlwind's on the hill,
 Or frosty air is keen and still,
 And to herself she cries,
 'Oh misery! oh misery!
 Oh woe is me! oh misery!'"

VIII

"Now wherefore, thus, by day and night
 In rain, in tempest, and in snow,
 Thus to the dreary mountain-top
 Does this poor Woman go?
 And why sits she beside the Thorn
 When the blue daylight's in the sky
 Or when the whirlwind's on the hill,
 Or frosty air is keen and still,
 And wherefore does she cry?—
 O wherefore? wherefore? tell me why
 Does she repeat that doleful cry?"

IX

"I cannot tell; I wish I could;
 For the true reason no one knows:
 But would you gladly view the spot,
 The spot to which she goes;
 The hillock like an infant's grave,
 The pond—and Thorn, so old and grey;
 Pass by her door—'tis seldom shut—
 And, if you see her in her hut—
 Then to the spot away!
 I never heard of such as dare
 Approach the spot when she is there."

X

"But wherefore to the mountain-top
 Can this unhappy Woman go?
 Whatever star is in the skies,
 Whatever wind may blow?"
 "Full twenty years are past and gone
 Since she (her name is Martha Ray)
 Gave with a maiden's true good-will
 Her company to Stephen Hill;
 And she was blithe and gay,
 While friends and kindred all approved
 Of him whom tenderly she loved.

XI

“ And they had fixed the wedding day,
The morning that must wed them both ;
But Stephen to another Maid
Had sworn another oath :
And, with this other Maid, to church
Unthinking Stephen went—
Poor Martha ! on that woeful day
A pang of pitiless dismay
Into her soul was sent ;
A fire was kindled in her breast,
Which might not burn itself to rest.

XII

“ They say, full six months after this,
While yet the summer leaves were green,
She to the mountain-top would go,
And there was often seen.
What could she seek ?—or wish to hide ?
Her state to any eye was plain ;
She was with child, and she was mad ;
Yet often was she sober sad
From her exceeding pain.
O guilty Father—would that death
Had saved him from that breach of faith !

XIII

“ Sad case for such a brain to hold
Communion with a stirring child !
Sad case, as you may think, for one
Who had a brain so wild !
Last Christmas-eve we talked of this,
And grey-haired Wilfred of the glen
Held that the unborn infant wrought
About its mother’s heart, and brought
Her senses back again :
And, when at last her time drew near
Her looks were calm, her senses clear.

XIV

“ More know I not, I wish I did,
And it should all be told to you ;
For what became of this poor child
No mortal ever knew ;

The Thorn

Nay—if a child to her was born
No earthly tongue could ever tell ;
And if 'twas born alive or dead,
Far less could this with proof be said ;
But some remember well,
That Martha Ray about this time
Would up the mountain often climb.

XV

“ And all that winter, when at night
The wind blew from the mountain-peak,
'Twas worth your while, though in the dark,
The churchyard path to seek :
For many a time and oft were heard
Cries coming from the mountain head :
Some plainly living voices were ;
And others, I've heard many swear,
Were voices of the dead :
I cannot think, whate'er they say,
They had to do with Martha Ray.

XVI

“ But that she goes to this old Thorn,
The Thorn which I described to you,
And there sits in a scarlet cloak
I will be sworn is true.
For one day with my telescope,
To view the ocean wide and bright,
When to this country first I came,
Ere I had heard of Martha's name,
I climbed the mountain's height :—
A storm came on, and I could see
No object higher than my knee.

XVII

“ 'Twas mist and rain, and storm and rain :
No screen, no fence could I discover
And then the wind ! in sooth, it was
A wind full ten times over.
I looked around, I thought I saw
A jutting crag,—and off I ran,
Head-foremost, through the driving rain,
The shelter of the crag to gain ;
And, as I am a man,
Instead of jutting crag, I found
A Woman seated on the ground.

The Thorn

17

XVIII

"I did not speak—I saw her face ;
Her face !—it was enough for me ;
I turned about and heard her cry,
'Oh misery ! oh misery !'
And there she sits, until the moon
Through half the clear blue sky will go .
And, when the little breezes make
The waters of the pond to shake,
As all the country know,
She shudders, and you hear her cry,
'Oh misery ! oh misery !'"

XIX

"But what's the Thorn ? and what the pond ?
And what the hill of moss to her ?
And what the creeping breeze that comes
The little pond to stir ?"
"I cannot tell ; but some will say
She hanged her baby on the tree ;
Some say she drowned it in the pond,
Which is a little step beyond :
But all and each agree,
The little Babe was buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XX

"I've heard, the moss is spotted red
With drops of that poor infant's blood ;
But kill a new-born infant thus,
I do not think she could !
Some say, if to the pond you go,
And fix on it a steady view,
The shadow of a babe you trace,
A baby and a baby's face,
And that it looks at you ;
Whene'er you look on it, 'tis plain
The baby looks at you again.

XXI

"And some had sworn an oath that she
Should be to public justice brought ;
And for the little infant's bones
With spades they would have sought.

18 Goody Blake and Harry Gill

But instantly the hill of moss
Before their eyes began to stir !
And, for full fifty yards around,
The grass—it shook upon the ground !
Yet all do still aver
The little Babe lies buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XXII

“ I cannot tell how this may be,
But plain it is the Thorn is bound
With heavy tufts of moss that strive
To drag it to the ground ;
And this I know, full many a time,
When she was on the mountain high,
By day, and in the silent night,
When all the stars shone clear and bright,
That I have heard her cry,
‘ Oh misery ! oh misery !
Oh woe is me ! oh misery ! ’ ”

(1798)

GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL¹

A TRUE STORY

OH ! what’s the matter ? what’s the matter ?
What is’t that ails young Harry Gill ?
That evermore his teeth they chatter,
Chatter, chatter, chatter still !
Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffle grey, and flannel fine ;
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
’Tis all the same with Harry Gill ;
The neighbours tell, and tell you truly,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
At night, at morning, and at noon,
’Tis all the same with Harry Gill ;
Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still !

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
And who so stout of limb as he ?

¹ Written at Alfoxden. (The incident from Dr. Darwin’s *Zoönomia*).

Goody Blake and Harry Gill 19

His cheeks were red as ruddy clover ;
His voice was like the voice of three.
Old Goody Blake was old and poor ;
Ill fed she was, and thinly clad ;
And any man who passed her door
Might see how poor a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling :
And then her three hours' work at night,
Alas ! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
It would not pay for candle-light.
Remote from sheltered village-green,
On a hill's northern side she dwelt,
Where from sea-blasts the hawthorns lean,
And hoary dews are slow to melt.

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
Two poor old Dames, as I have known,
Will often live in one small cottage ;
But she, poor Woman ! housed alone.
'Twas well enough when summer came,
The long, warm, lightsome summer-day,
Then at her door the *canty* Dame
Would sit, as any linnet, gay.

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
Oh then how her old bones would shake !
You would have said, if you had met her,
'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
Her evenings then were dull and dead :
Sad case it was, as you may think,
For very cold to go to bed ;
And then for cold not sleep a wink.

O joy for her ! whene'er in winter
The winds at night had made a rout ;
And scattered many a lusty splinter
And many a rotten bough about.
Yet never had she, well or sick,
As every man who knew her says,
A pile beforehand, turf or stick,
Enough to warm her for three days.

Now, when the frost was past enduring,
And made her poor old bones to ache,
Could any thing be more alluring
Than an old hedge to Goody Blake ?

20 Goody Blake and Harry Gill

And, now and then, it must be said,
When her old bones were cold and chill,
She left her fire, or left her bed,
To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected
This trespass of old Goody Blake ;
And vowed that she should be detected—
Then he on her would vengeance take.
And oft from his warm fire he'd go,
And to the fields his road would take ;
And there, at night, in frost and snow,
He watched to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
Thus looking out did Harry stand :
The moon was full and shining clearly,
And crisp with frost the stubble land.
—He hears a noise—he's all awake—
Again?—on tip-toe down the hill
He softly creeps—'tis Goody Blake ;
She's at the hedge of Harry Gill !

Right glad was he when he beheld her :
Stick after stick did Goody pull :
He stood behind a bush of elder,
Till she had filled her apron full.
When with her load she turned about,
The by-way back again to take ;
He started forward, with a shout,
And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he took her,
And by the arm he held her fast,
And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
And cried, " I've caught you then at last !"
Then Goody, who had nothing said,
Her bundle from her lap let fall ;
And, kneeling on the sticks, she prayed
To God that is the judge of all.

She prayed, her withered hand uprearing,
While Harry held her by the arm—
" God ! who art never out of hearing,
O may he never more be warm ! "

Her Eyes are Wild

21

The cold, cold moon above her head,
Thus on her knees did Goody pray ;
Young Harry heard what she had said :
And icy cold he turned away.

He went complaining all the morrow
That he was cold and very chill :
His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow,
Alas ! that day for Harry Gill !
That day he wore a riding-coat,
But not a whit the warmer he :
Another was on Thursday bought,
And ere the Sabbath he had three.

'Twas all in vain, a useless matter,
And blankets were about him pinned ;
Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter ;
Like a loose casement in the wind.
And Harry's flesh it fell away ;
And all who see him say, 'tis plain,
That, live as long as live he may,
He never will be warm again.

No word to any man he utters,
A-bed or up, to young or old ;
But ever to himself he mutters,
" Poor Harry Gill is very cold."
A-bed or up, by night or day ;
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill !

(1798)

HER EYES ARE WILD¹

I

HER eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal-black hair ;
Her eyebrows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.
She has a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone :
And underneath the hay-stack warm,
And on the greenwood stone,
She talked and sung the woods among,
And it was in the English tongue.

¹ Written at Alfoxden. The subject was reported to me by a lady of Bristol, who had seen the poor creature.

Her Eyes are Wild

II

"Sweet babe ! they say that I am mad,
But nay, my heart is far too glad ;
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing :
Then, lovely baby, do not fear !
I pray thee have no fear of me ;
But safe as in a cradle, here,
My lovely baby ! thou shalt be :
To thee I know too much I owe ;
I cannot work thee any woe.

III

"A fire was once within my brain ;
And in my head a dull, dull pain ;
And fiendish faces, one, two, three,
Hung at my breast, and pulled at me ;
But then there came a sight of joy ;
It came at once to do me good ;
I waked, and saw my little boy,
My little boy of flesh and blood ;
Oh joy for me that sight to see !
For he was here, and only he.

IV

"Suck, little babe, oh suck again !
It cools my blood ; it cools my brain ;
Thy lips I feel them, baby ! they
Draw from my heart the pain away.
Oh ! press me with thy little hand ;
It loosens something at my chest ;
About that tight and deadly band
I feel thy little fingers prest.
The breeze I see is in the tree :
It comes to cool my babe and me.

"Oh ! love me, love me, little boy !
Thou art thy mother's only joy ;
And do not dread the waves below,
When o'er the sea-rock's edge we go ;
The high crag cannot work me harm,
Nor leaping torrents when they howl ;
The babe I carry on my arm,

Her Eyes are Wild

23

He saves for me my precious soul ;
Then happy lie ; for blest am I ;
Without me my sweet babe would die.

VI

"Then do not fear, my boy ! for thee
Bold as a lion will I be ;
And I will always be thy guide,
Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
I'll build an Indian bower ; I know
The leaves that make the softest bed :
And, if from me thou wilt not go,
But still be true till I am dead,
My pretty thing ! then thou shalt sing
As merry as the birds in spring.

VII

"Thy father cares not for my breast,
'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest ;
'Tis all thine own !—and, if its hue
Be changed, that was so fair to view,
'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove !
My beauty, little child, is flown,
But thou wilt live with me in love,
And what if my poor cheek be brown ?
'Tis well for me, thou canst not see
How pale and wan it else would be.

VIII

"Dread not their taunts, my little Life ;
I am thy father's wedded wife ;
And underneath the spreading tree
We two will live in honesty.
If his sweet boy he could forsake,
With me he never would have stayed :
From him no harm my babe can take ;
But he, poor man ! is wretched made ;
And every day we two will pray
For him that's gone and far away.

IX

"I'll teach my boy the sweetest things :
I'll teach him how the owlet sings.
My little babe ! thy lips are still,
And thou hast almost sucked thy fill.
—Where art thou gone, my own dear child ?

What wicked looks are those I see?
 Alas! alas! that look so wild,
 It never, never came from me:
 If thou art mad, my pretty lad,
 Then I must be for ever sad.

"Oh! smile on me, my little lamb!
 For I thy own dear mother am:
 My love for thee has well been tried:
 I've sought thy father far and wide.
 I know the poisons of the shade;
 I know the earth-nuts fit for food:
 Then, pretty dear, be not afraid:
 We'll find thy father in the wood.
 Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away
 And there, my babe, we'll live for aye."

(1798)

SIMON LEE¹

THE OLD HUNTSMAN;

WITH AN INCIDENT IN WHICH HE WAS CONCERNED

In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
 Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
 An old Man dwells, a little man,—
 'Tis said he once was tall.
 Full five-and-thirty years he lived
 A running huntsman merry;
 And still the centre of his cheek
 Is red as a ripe cherry.
 No man like him the horn could sound,
 And hill and valley rang with glee
 When Echo bandied, round and round,
 The halloo of Simon Lee.
 In those proud days, he little cared
 For husbandry or tillage;
 To blither tasks did Simon rouse
 The sleepers of the village.

¹ This old man had been huntsman to the squires of Alfoxden, which, at the time we occupied it, belonged to a minor. The old man's cottage stood upon the common, a little way from the entrance to Alfoxden Park. . . . I have, after an interval of forty-five years, the image of the old man as fresh before my eyes as if I had seen him yesterday. The expression when the hounds were out, "I dearly love their voice," was word for word from his own lips.

He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind ;
And often, ere the chase was done,
He reeled, and was stone-blind.
And still there's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices ;
For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves their voices !

But, oh the heavy change !—bereft
Of health, strength, friends, and kindred, see !
Old Simon to the world is left
In liveried poverty.
His Master's dead,—and no one now
Dwells in the Hall of Ivor ;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead ;
He is the sole survivor.

And he is lean and he is sick ;
His body, dwindled and awry,
Rests upon ankles swoln and thick ;
His legs are thin and dry.
One prop he has, and only one,
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village Common.

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath
Enclosed when he was stronger ;
But what to them avails the land
Which he can till no longer ?

Oft, working by her Husband's side,
Ruth does what Simon cannot do ;
For she, with scanty cause for pride,
Is stouter of the two.
And, though you with your utmost skill
From labour could not wean them,
'Tis little, very little—all
That they can do between them.

Few months of life has he in store
As he to you will tell,

For still, the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell.
My gentle Reader, I perceive
How patiently you've waited,
And now I fear that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O Reader ! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
O gentle Reader ! you would find
A tale in every thing.
What more I have to say is short,
And you must kindly take it :
It is no tale ; but, should you think,
Perhaps a tale you'll make it.

One summer-day I chanced to see
This old Man doing all he could
To unearth the root of an old tree,
A stump of rotten wood.
The mattock tottered in his hand ;
So vain was his endeavour,
That at the root of the old tree
He might have worked for ever.

"You're overtasked, good Simon Lee,
Give me your tool," to him I said ;
And at the word right gladly he
Received my proffered aid.
I struck, and with a single blow
The tangled root I severed,
At which the poor old Man so long
And vainly had endeavoured.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seemed to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought
They never would have done.
—I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning ;
Alas ! the gratitude of men
Hath oftener left me mourning.

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING¹

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran ;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths ;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure :—
But the least motion which they made
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air ;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man ?

(1798)

TO MY SISTER²

It is the first mild day of March :
Each minute sweeter than before
The redbreast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

¹ Actually composed while I was sitting by the side of the brook that runs down from the Comb, in which stands the village of Alford, through the grounds of Alfoxden. It was a chosen resort of mine.

² Composed in front of Alfoxden House. My little boy-messenger on this occasion was the son of Basil Montagu. The larch mentioned in the first stanza was standing when I revisited the place in May 1841, more than forty years after.

28 'A Whirl-blast from behind the Hill'

My sister ! ('tis a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign ;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you ;—and, pray,
Put on with speed your woodland dress ;
And bring no book : for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living calendar :
We from to-day, my Friend, will date
The opening of the year.

Love, now a universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth :
—It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
Than years of toiling reason :
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,
Which they shall long obey :
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,
We'll frame the measure of our souls :
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my Sister ! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress ;
And bring no book : for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

(1798)

"A WHIRL-BLAST FROM BEHIND THE HILL"¹

A WHIRL-BLAST from behind the hill
Rushed o'er the wood with startling sound ;
Then—all at once the air was still,
And showers of hailstones pattered round.

¹ Observed in the holly-grove at Alfoxden, where these verses were written in the spring of 1799.

The Complaint

29

Where leafless oaks towered high above,
I sat within an undergrove
Of tallest hollies, tall and green ;
A fairer bower was never seen.
From year to year the spacious floor
With withered leaves is covered o'er,
And all the year the bower is green.
But see ! where'er the hailstones drop
The withered leaves all skip and hop ;
There's not a breeze—no breath of air—
Yet here, and there, and everywhere
Along the floor, beneath the shade
By those embowering hollies made,
The leaves in myriads jump and spring,
As if with pipes and music rare
Some Robin Good-fellow were there,
And all those leaves, in festive glee,
Were dancing to the minstrelsy.

(1798)

THE COMPLAINT ¹

OF A FORSAKEN INDIAN WOMAN

BEFORE I see another day,
Oh let my body die away !
In sleep I heard the northern gleams ;
The stars, they were among my dreams ;
In rustling conflict through the skies,
I heard, I saw the flashes drive,
And yet they are upon my eyes,
And yet I am alive ;
Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away !

¹ Written at Alfoxden, where I read Hearne's *Journey* with deep interest. It was composed for the volume of "Lyrical Ballads."

When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions, he is left behind, covered over with deer-skins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel, if the situation of the place will afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and if he be unable to follow, or overtake them, he perishes alone in the desert ; unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with some other tribes of Indians. The females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work *HEARNE'S Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean*. In the

as the same writer informs us, when the northern
n in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling
noise, as alluded to in the following poem.

The Complaint

II

My fire is dead : it knew no pain ;
 Yet is it dead, and I remain :
 All stiff with ice the ashes lie ;
 And they are dead, and I will die.
 When I was well, I wished to live,
 For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire
 But they to me no joy can give,
 No pleasure now, and no desire.
 Then here contented will I lie !
 Alone, I cannot fear to die.

III

Alas ! ye might have dragged me on
 Another day, a single one !
 Too soon I yielded to despair ;
 Why did ye listen to my prayer ?
 When ye were gone my limbs were stronger ;
 And oh, how grievously I rue,
 That, afterwards, a little longer,
 My friends, I did not follow you !
 For strong and without pain I lay,
 Dear friends, when ye were gone away.

My Child ! they gave thee to another,
 A woman who was not thy mother.
 When from my arms my Babe they took,
 On me how strangely did he look !
 Through his whole body something ran,
 A most strange working did I see ;
 —As if he strove to be a man,
 That he might pull the sledge for me :
 And then he stretched his arms, how wild !
 Oh mercy ! like a helpless child.

V

My little joy ! my little pride !
 In two days more I must have died.
 Then do not weep and grieve for me ;
 I feel I must have died with thee.
 O wind, that o'er my head art flying
 The way my friends their course did bend,
 I should not feel the pain of dying,
 Could I with thee a message send ;

The Last of the Flock

31

Too soon, my friends, ye went away ;
For I had many things to say.

VI

I'll follow you across the snow ;
Ye travel heavily and slow ;
In spite of all my weary pain
I'll look upon your tents again.
—My fire is dead, and snowy white
The water which beside it stood :
The wolf has come to me to-night,
And he has stolen away my food.
For ever left alone am I ;
Then wherefore should I fear to die ?

VII

Young as I am, my course is run,
I shall not see another sun ;
I cannot lift my limbs to know
If they have any life or no.
My poor forsaken Child, if I
For once could have thee close to me,
With happy heart I then would die,
And my last thought would happy be ;
But thou, dear Babe, art far away,
Nor shall I see another day.

(1798)

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK¹

I

IN distant countries have I been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown,
Weep in the public roads, alone.
But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad highway, I met ;
Along the broad highway he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet :
Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad ;
And in his arms a Lamb he had.

II

He saw me, and he turned aside,
As if he wished himself to hide :

¹ Written at Alfoxden, for "Lyrical Ballads." The incident occurred in the village of Holford, close by Alfoxden.

The Last of the Flock

And with his coat did then essay
 To wipe those briny tears away.
 I followed him, and said, "My friend,
 What ails you? wherefore weep you so?"
 —"Shame on me, Sir! this lusty Lamb,
 He makes my tears to flow.
 To-day I fetched him from the rock;
 He is the last of all my flock.

III

"When I was young, a single man,
 And after youthful follies ran,
 Though little given to care and thought,
 Yet, so it was, an ewe I bought;
 And other sheep from her I raised,
 As healthy sheep as you might see;
 And then I married, and was rich
 As I could wish to be;
 Of sheep I numbered a full score,
 And every year increased my store.

IV

"Year after year my stock it grew;
 And from this one, this single ewe,
 Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
 As fine a flock as ever grazed!
 Upon the Quantock hills they fed;
 They throve, and we at home did thrive:
 —This lusty Lamb of all my store
 Is all that is alive;
 And now I care not if we die,
 And perish all of poverty.

"Six Children, Sir! had I to feed;
 Hard labour in a time of need!
 My pride was tamed, and in our grief
 I of the Parish asked relief.
 They said, I was a wealthy man;
 My sheep upon the uplands fed,
 And it was fit that thence I took
 Whereof to buy us bread.
 'Do this: how can we give to you,'
 They cried, 'what to the poor is due?'

VI

"I sold a sheep, as they had said,
And bought my little children bread,
And they were healthy with their food,
For me—it never did me good.
A woeful time it was for me,
To see the end of all my gains,
The pretty flock which I had reared
With all my care and pains,
To see it melt like snow away—
For me it was a woeful day.

VII

"Another still ! and still another !
A little lamb, and then its mother !
It was a vein that never stopped—
Like blood-drops from my heart they dropped.
"Till thirty were not left alive
They dwindled, dwindled, one by one,
And I may say, that many a time
I wished they all were gone—
Reckless of what might come at last
Were but the bitter struggle past.

VIII

"To wicked deeds I was inclined,
And wicked fancies crossed my mind ;
And every man I chanced to see,
I thought he knew some ill of me :
No peace, no comfort could I find,
No ease, within doors or without ;
And, crazily and wearily
I went my work about ;
And oft was moved to flee from home,
And hide my head where wild beasts roam.

IX

"Sir ! 'twas a precious flock to me,
As dear as my own children be ;
For daily with my growing store
I loved my children more and more.
Alas ! it was an evil time ;
God cursed me in my sore distress ;
I prayed, yet every day I thought
I loved my children less ;

And every week, and every day,
My flock it seemed to melt away.

“They dwindled, Sir, sad sight to see
From ten to five, from five to three,
A lamb, a wether, and a ewe ;—
And then at last from three to two ;
And, of my fifty, yesterday
I had but only one :
And here it lies upon my arm,
Alas ! and I have none ;—
To-day I fetched it from the rock ;
It is the last of all my flock.”

(1798)

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISIT-
ING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR. JULY 13,
1798¹

FIVE years have past ; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters ! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.²—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion ; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild : these pastoral farms,

¹ No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my Sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol. It was published almost immediately after in the *Lyrical Ballads*.

² The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

Green to the very door ; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees !
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye :
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart ;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration :—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure : such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime ; that blessed mood
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul :
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh ! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight ; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye ! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee !
And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,

And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again :
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills ; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led : more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite ; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur ; other gifts
Have followed ; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompence. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth ; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains ; and of all that we behold

From this green earth ; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,¹
And what perceive ; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,

If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay :
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river ; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend ; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh ! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister ! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her ; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy : for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk ;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee : and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure ; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies ; oh ! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations ! Nor, perchance—

¹ This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young's
the exact expression of which I do not recollect.

38 The Old Cumberland Beggar

If I should be where I no more can hear
 Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
 Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
 That on the banks of this delightful stream
 We stood together ; and that I, so long
 A worshipper of Nature, hither came
 Unwearied in that service : rather say
 With warmer love—oh ! with far deeper zeal
 Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
 That after many wanderings, many years
 Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
 And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
 More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake !
 (1798)

THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR ¹

I saw an aged Beggar in my walk ;
 And he was seated, by the highway side,
 On a low structure of rude masonry
 Built at the foot of a huge hill, that they
 Who lead their horses down the steep rough road
 May thence remount at ease. The aged Man
 Had placed his staff across the broad smooth stone
 That overlays the pile ; and, from a bag
 All white with flour, the dole of village dames,
 He drew his scraps and fragments, one by one ;
 And scanned them with a fixed and serious look
 Of idle computation. In the sun,
 Upon the second step of that small pile,
 Surrounded by those wild unpeopled hills,
 He sat, and ate his food in solitude :
 And ever, scattered from his palsied hand,
 That, still attempting to prevent the waste,
 Was baffled still, the crumbs in little showers
 Fell on the ground ; and the small mountain birds,
 Not venturing yet to peck their destined meal,
 Approached within the length of half his staff.
 Him from my childhood have I known ; and then
 He was so old, he seems not older now ;
 He travels on, a solitary Man,
 So helpless in appearance, that for him
 The sauntering Horseman throws not with a slack

¹ Observed, and with great benefit to my own heart, when I was a child : written at Racedown and Alfoxden in my twenty-third year.

The Old Cumberland Beggar 39

And careless hand his alms upon the ground,
But stops,—that he may safely lodge the coin
Within the old Man's hat ; nor quits him so,
But still, when he has given his horse the rein,
Watches the aged Beggar with a look
Sidelong, and half-reverted. She who tends
The toll-gate, when in summer at her door
She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees
The aged beggar coming, quits her work,
And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.
The post-boy, when his rattling wheels o'ertake
The aged Beggar in the woody lane,
Shouts to him from behind ; and if, thus warned,
The old man does not change his course, the boy
Turns with less noisy wheels to the roadside,
And passes gently by, without a curse
Upon his lips, or anger at his heart.

He travels on, a solitary Man ;
His age has no companion. On the ground
His eyes are turned, and, as he moves along
They move along the ground ; and, evermore,
Instead of common and habitual sight
Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale,
And the blue sky, one little span of earth
Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to day,
Bow-bent, his eyes for ever on the ground,
He plies his weary journey ; seeing still,
And seldom knowing that he sees, some straw,
Some scattered leaf, or marks which, in one track,
The nails of cart or chariot-wheel have left
Impressed on the white road,—in the same line,
At distance still the same. Poor Traveller !
His staff trails with him ; scarcely do his feet
Disturb the summer dust ; he is so still
In look and motion, that the cottage curs,
Ere he has passed the door, will turn away,
Weary of barking at him. Boys and girls,
The vacant and the busy, maids and youths,
And urchins newly breeched—all pass him by :
Him even the slow-paced waggon leaves behind.

But deem not this Man useless.—Statesmen ! ye
Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
Who have a broom still ready in your hands
To rid the world of nuisances ; ye proud,
Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye contemplate

40 The Old Cumberland Beggar

Your talents, power, or wisdom, deem him not
 A burthen of the earth! 'Tis Nature's law
 That none, the meanest of created things,
 Or forms created the most vile and brute,
 The dumbest or most noxious, should exist
 Divorced from good—a spirit and pulse of good,
 A life and soul, to every mode of being
 Inseparably linked. Then be assured
 That 'tis not fallow ground that they ever owned
 The *sublime* *sublime* *sublime* *sublime* *sublime*
 Which man is born to—sink, how'er depressed,
 So low as to be scorned without a sin;
 Without offence to God cast out of view;
 Like the dry remnant of a garden-flower
 Whose seeds are shed, or as an implement
 Worn out and worthless. While from door to door,
 This old Man creeps, the villagers in him
 Behold a record which together binds
 Past deeds and offices of charity,
 Else unremembered, and so keeps alive
 The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years,
 And that half-wisdom half-experience gives,
 Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign
 To selfishness and cold oblivious cares.
 Among the farms and solitary huts,
 Hamlets and thinly-scattered villages,
 Where'er the aged Beggar takes his rounds,
 The mild necessity of use compels
 To acts of love; and habit does the work
 Of reason; yet prepares that after-joy
 Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,
 By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursued,
 Doth find herself insensibly disposed
 To virtue and true goodness.

Some there are,
 By their good works exalted, lofty minds
 And meditative, authors of delight
 And happiness, which to the end of time
 Will live, and spread, and kindle: even such minds
 In childhood, from this solitary Being,
 Or from like wanderer, haply have received
 (A thing more precious far than all that books
 Or the solitudes of love can do!)
 That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
 In which they found their kindred with a world

The Old Cumberland Beggar 41

Where want and sorrow were. The easy man
Who sits at his own door,—and, like the pear
That overhangs his head from the green wall,
Feeds in the sunshine ; the robust and young,
The prosperous and unthinking, they who live
Sheltered, and flourish in a little grove
Of their own kindred ;—all behold in him
A silent monitor, which on their minds
Must needs impress a transitory thought
Of self-congratulation, to the heart
Of each recalling his peculiar boons,
His charters and exemptions ; and, perchance,
Though he to no one give the fortitude
And circumspection needful to preserve
His present blessings, and to husband up
The respite of the season, he, at least,
And 'tis no vulgar service, makes them felt.

Yet further.—Many, I believe, there are
Who live a life of virtuous decency,
Men who can hear the Decalogue and feel
No self-reproach ; who of the moral law
Established in the land where they abide
Are strict observers ; and not negligent
In acts of love to those with whom they dwell,
Their kindred, and the children of their blood.
Praise be to such, and to their slumbers peace !
—But of the poor man ask, the abject poor ;
Go, and demand of him, if there be here
In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
And these inevitable charities,
Wherewith to satisfy the human soul ?
No—man is dear to man ; the poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life
When they can know and feel that they have been,
Themselves, the fathers and the dealers-out
Of some small blessings ; have been kind to such
As needed kindness, for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart.
—Such pleasure is to one kind Being known,
My neighbour, when with punctual care, each week
Duly as Friday comes, though pressed herself
By her own wants, she from her store of meal
Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip
Of this old Mendicant, and, from her door
Returning with exhilarated heart,

42 Animal Tranquillity and Decay

Sits by her fire, and builds her hope in heaven.

Then let him pass, a blessing on his head !

And while in that vast solitude to which
The tide of things has borne him, he appears
To breathe and live but for himself alone,
Unblamed, uninjured, let him bear about
The good which the benignant law of Heaven
Has hung around him : and, while life is his,
Still let him prompt the unlettered villagers
To tender offices and pensive thoughts.

—Then let him pass, a blessing on his head !

And, long as he can wander, let him breathe
The freshness of the valleys ; let his blood
Struggle with frosty air and winter snows ;
And let the chartered wind that sweeps the heath
Beat his grey locks against his withered face.
Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness
Gives the last human interest to his heart.
May never HOUSE, misnamed of INDUSTRY,
Make him a captive !—for that pent-up din,
Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air,
Be his the natural silence of old age !
Let him be free of mountain solitudes ;
And have around him, whether heard or not,
The pleasant melody of woodland birds.
Few are his pleasures : if his eyes have now
Been doomed so long to settle upon earth
That not without some effort they behold
The countenance of the horizontal sun,
Rising or setting, let the light at least
Find a free entrance to their languid orbs.
And let him, *where* and *when* he will, sit down
Beneath the trees, or on a grassy bank
Of highway side, and with the little birds
Share his chance-gathered meal ; and, finally,
As in the eye of Nature he has lived,
So in the eye of Nature let him die !

(1798)

ANIMAL TRANQUILLITY AND DECAY

THE little hedgerow birds,
That peck along the roads, regard him not.
He travels on, and in his face, his step,
His gait, is one expression : every limb,
His look and *every* *feature*, all bespeak

A man who does not move with pain, but moves
 With thought.—He is insensibly subdued
 To settled quiet : he is one by whom
 All effort seems forgotten ; one to whom
 Long patience hath such mild composure given,
 That patience now doth seem a thing of which
 He hath no need. He is by nature led
 To peace so perfect that the young behold
 With envy, what the Old Man hardly feels.

(1798)

THE SIMPLON PASS ¹

———BROOK and road

Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy Pass,
 And with them did we journey several hours
 At a slow step. The immeasurable height
 Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
 The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
 And in the narrow rent, at every turn,
 Winds thwarting winds bewildered and forlorn,
 The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
 The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
 Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside
 As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
 And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
 The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,
 Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—
 Were all like workings of one mind, the features
 Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree
 Characters of the great Apocalypse,
 The types and symbols of Eternity,
 Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

(1799)

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

✓ CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH ¹

WISDOM and Spirit of the universe !
 Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought !
 And giv'st to forms and images a breath
 And everlasting motion ! not in vain,
 By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn
 Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
 The passions that build up our human soul ;

¹ Written in Germany.

Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man ;
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature ; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear,—until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valleys made
A lonely scene more lonesome ; among woods
At noon ; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine :
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.
And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
The cottage-windows through the twilight blazed,
I heeded not the summons : happy time
It was indeed for all of us ; for me
It was a time of rapture ! Clear and loud
The village-clock tolled six—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home.---All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle : with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud ;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron ; while far-distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star ;
Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain : and oftentimes,

When we had given our bodies to the wind,
 And all the shadowy banks on either side
 Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
 The rapid line of motion, then at once
 Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
 Stopped short ; yet still the solitary cliffs
 Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
 With visible motion her diurnal round !
 Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
 Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
 Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

(1799)

THERE WAS A BOY¹

THERE was a Boy ; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
 And islands of Winander !—many a time,
 At evening, when the earliest stars began
 To move along the edges of the hills,
 Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
 Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake ;
 And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
 Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
 Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
 Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
 That they might answer him.—And they would shout
 Across the watery vale, and shout again,
 Responsive to his call,—with quivering peals,
 And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
 Redoubled and redoubled ; concourse wild
 Of jocund din ! And, when there came a pause
 Of silence such as baffled his best skill :
 Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
 Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
 Has carried far into his heart the voice
 Of mountain-torrents ; or the visible scene
 Would enter unawares into his mind
 With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
 Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
 Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This boy was taken from his mates, and died
 In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
 Pre-eminent in beauty is the vale
 Where he was born and bred : the churchyard hangs

¹ Written in Germany.

Upon a slope above the village-school ;
 And, through that churchyard when my way has led
 On summer-evenings, I believe, that there
 A long half-hour together I have stood
 Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies!

(1799)

NUTTING ¹

—————It seems a day
 (I speak of one from many singled out)
 One of those heavenly days that cannot die ;
 When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
 I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth
 With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,
 A nutting-crook in hand ; and turned my steps
 Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,
 Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds
 Which for that service had been husbanded,
 By exhortation of my frugal Dame—
 Motley accoutrement, of power to smile
 At thorns, and brakes, and brambles—and, in truth,
 More ragged than need was ! O'er pathless rocks,
 Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets,
 Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook
 Unvisited, where not a broken bough
 Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign
 Of devastation ; but the hazels rose
 Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,
 A virgin scene !—A little while I stood,
 Breathing with such suppression of the heart
 As joy delights in ; and, with wise restraint
 Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
 The banquet ;—or beneath the trees I sate
 Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played ;
 A temper known to those, who, after long
 And weary expectation, have been blest
 With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
 Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
 The violets of five seasons re-appear
 And fade, unseen by any human eye ;
 Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on

¹ Written in Germany ; intended as part of a poem on my own life, but struck out as not being wanted there. Like most of my school-fellows I was an impassioned nutter. For this pleasure the vale of Esthwaite, abounding in coppice-wood, furnished a very wide range.

For ever ; and I saw the sparkling foam,
 And—with my cheek on one of those green stones
 That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,
 Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep—
 I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
 In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
 Tribute to ease ; and, of its joy secure,
 The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
 Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
 And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
 And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash
 And merciless ravage : and the shady nook
 Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
 Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
 Their quiet being : and, unless I now
 Confound my present feelings with the past,
 Ere from the mutilated bower I turned
 Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
 I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
 The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky—
 Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades
 In gentleness of heart ; with gentle hand
 Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

(1799)

LUCY¹

STRANGE fits of passion have I known :
 And I will dare to tell,
 But in the Lover's ear alone,
 What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day
 Fresh as a rose in June,
 I to her cottage bent my way,
 Beneath an evening-moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
 All over the wide lea ;
 With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
 Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard-plot ;
 And, as we climbed the hill,
 The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
 Came near, and nearer still.

¹ Written in Germany in 1799.

Lucy

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon !
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse moved on ; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped :
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head !

" O mercy ! " to myself I cried,
" If Lucy should be dead ! "

II

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love :

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye !
— Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be ;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me !

III

I TRAVELLED among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea ;
Nor, England ! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream !
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time ; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire ;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
The bowers where Lucy played ;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

IV

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown ;
This Child I to myself will take ;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse : and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn,
Or up the mountain springs ;
And her's shall be the breathing balm,
And her's the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her ; for her the willow bend ;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her ; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell ;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run !
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene ;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

A Poet's Epitaph

v

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal ;
 I had no human fears :
 She seemed a thing that could not feel
 The touch of earthly years.
 No motion has she now, no force ;
 She neither hears nor sees ;
 Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
 With rocks, and stones, and trees.

A POET'S EPITAPH

ART thou a Statist in the van
 Of public conflicts trained and bred ?
 —First learn to love one living man ;
Then may'st thou think upon the dead.
 A Lawyer art thou ?—draw not nigh !
 Go, carry to some fitter place
 The keenness of that practised eye,
 The hardness of that sallow face.
 Art thou a Man of purple cheer ?
 A rosy Man, right plump to see ?
 Approach ; yet, Doctor, not too near,
 This grave no cushion is for thee.
 Or art thou one of gallant pride,
 A Soldier and no man of chaff ?
 Welcome ! but lay thy sword aside,
 And lean upon a peasant's staff.
 Physician art thou ? one, all eyes,
 Philosopher ! a fingering slave,
 One that would peep and botanise
 Upon his mother's grave ?
 Wrapt closely in thy sensual fleece,
 O turn aside,—and take, I pray,
 That he below may rest in peace,
 Thy ever-dwindling soul, away !
 A Moralist perchance appears ;
 Led, Heaven knows how ! to this poor sod :
 And he has neither eyes nor ears ;
 Himself his world, and his own God ;
 One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling
 Nor form, nor feeling, great or small ;

A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual All-in-all !
Shut close the door ; press down the latch ;
Sleep in thy intellectual crust ;
Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch
Near this unprofitable dust.
But who is He, with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet brown ?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.
He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noon-day grove ;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.
The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley, he has viewed ;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.
In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart,—
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.
But he is weak ; both Man and Boy,
Hath been an idler in the land ;
Contented if he might enjoy
The things which others understand.
—Come hither in thy hour of strength ;
Come, weak as is a breaking wave !
Here stretch thy body at full length ;
Or build thy house upon this grave.

(1799)

MATTHEW

IF Nature, for a favourite child,
In thee hath tempered so her clay,
That every hour thy heart runs wild,
Yet never once doth go astray,

¹ In the School of ——— is a tablet, on which are inscribed, in gilt letters, the Names of the several persons who have been Schoolmasters there since the foundation of the School, with the time at which they entered upon and quitted their office. Opposite to one of those names the Author wrote these lines.

Read o'er these lines ; and then review
This tablet, that thus humbly rears
In such diversity of hue
Its history of two hundred years.

—When through this little wreck of fame,
Cipher and syllable ! thine eye "
Has travelled down to Matthew's name,
Pause with no common sympathy.

And, if a sleeping tear should wake,
Then be it neither checked nor stayed :
For Matthew a request I make
Which for himself he had not made.

Poor Matthew, all his frolics o'er,
Is silent as a standing pool ;
Far from the chimney's merry roar,
And murmur of the village school.

The sighs which Matthew heaved were sighs
Of one tired out with fun and madness ;
The tears which came to Matthew's eyes
Were tears of light, the dew of gladness.

Yet, sometimes, when the secret cup
Of still and serious thought went round,
He seemed as if he drank it up—
He felt with spirit so profound,

—Thou soul of God's best earthly mould !
Thou happy Soul ! and can it be
That these two words of glittering gold
Are all that must remain of thee ?

(1799)

II

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS

WE walked along, while bright and red
Uprose the morning sun ;
And Matthew stopped, he looked, and said,
"The will of God be done !"

A village schoolmaster was he,
With hair of glittering grey ;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass,
And by the steaming rills,
We travelled merrily, to pass
A day among the hills.

“Our work,” said I, “was well begun,
Then, from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought?”

A second time did Matthew stop ;
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain-top,
To me he made reply :

“Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

“And just above yon slope of corn
Such colours, and no other,
Were in the sky, that April morn,
Of this the very brother.

“With rod and line I sued the sport
Which that sweet season gave,
And, to the churchyard come, stopped short
Beside my daughter’s grave.

“Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale ;
And then she sang ;—she would have been
A very nightingale.

“Six feet in earth my Emma lay ;
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seemed, than till that day
I e’er had loved before.

“And, turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the churchyard yew,
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

“A basket on her head she bare ;
Her brow was smooth and white :
To see a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight !

"No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripped with foot so free ;
She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

"There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine ;
I looked at her, and looked again :
And did not wish her mine !"

Matthew is in his grave, yet now,
Methinks, I see him stand,
As at that moment, with a bough
Of wilding in his hand.

(1799)

III

THE FOUNTAIN

A CONVERSATION

WE talked with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat ;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

"Now, Matthew !" said I, "let us match
This water's pleasant tune
With some old border-song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon ;

"Or of the church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made !"

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree ;
And thus the dear old Man replied,
The grey-haired man of glee :

"No check, no stay, this Streamlet fears ;
How merrily it goes !
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows

"And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

"My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

"Thus fares it still in our decay :
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

"The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

"With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife ; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free :

"But we are pressed by heavy laws ;
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

"If there be one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own ;
It is the man of mirth.

"My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me ; but by none
Am I enough beloved."

"Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains ;
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains ;

"And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I'll be a son to thee !"
At this he grasped my hand, and said,
"Alas ! that cannot be."

We rose up from the fountain-side ;
 And down the smooth descent
 Of the green sheep-track did we glide ;
 And through the wood we went ;

And, ere we came to Leonard's rock,
 He sang those witty rhymes
 About the crazy old church-clock
 And the bewildered chimes.

(1799)

IV

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY ¹

" WHY, William, on that old grey stone,
 Thus for the length of half a day,
 Why, William, sit you thus alone,
 And dream your time away ?

" Where are your books ?—that light bequeathed
 To Beings else forlorn and blind !
 Up ! up ! and drink the spirit breathed
 From dead men to their kind.

" You look round on your Mother Earth,
 As if she for no purpose bore you ;
 As if you were her first-born birth,
 And none had lived before you ! "

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
 When life was sweet, I knew not why,
 To me my good friend Matthew spake,
 And thus I made reply :

" The eye—it cannot choose but see ;
 We cannot bid the ear be still ;
 Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
 Against or with our will.

" Nor less I deem that there are Powers
 Which of themselves our minds impress ;
 That we can feed this mind of ours
 In a wise passiveness.

" Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
 Of things for ever speaking,
 That nothing of itself will come,
 But we must still be seeking ?

¹ Composed in front of the house at Alfoxden, in the spring of 1798 (1799)

“—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away.”

THE TABLES TURNED

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books ;
Or surely you'll grow double :
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books ! 'tis a dull and endless strife :
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music ! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark ! how blithe the throstle sings !
He, too, is no mean preacher :
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings ;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things :
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art ;
Close up those barren leaves ;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

VI

ADDRESS TO THE SCHOLARS OF THE VILLAGE
SCHOOL OF ———¹

I COME, ye little noisy Crew
 Not long your pastime to prevent ;
 I heard the blessing which to you
 Our common Friend and Father sent.
 I kissed his cheek before he died ;
 And when his breath was fled,
 I raised, while kneeling by his side,
 His hand :—it dropped like lead.
 Your hands, dear Little-ones, do all
 That can be done, will never fall
 Like his till they are dead.
 By night or day blow foul or fair,
 Ne'er will the best of all your train
 Play with the locks of his white hair,
 Or stand between his knees again.
 Here did he sit confined for hours ;
 But he could see the woods and plains,
 Could hear the wind and mark the showers
 Come streaming down the streaming panes.
 Now stretched beneath his grass-green mound
 He rests a prisoner of the ground.
 He loved the breathing air,
 He loved the sun, but if it rise
 Or set, to him where now he lies,
 Brings not a moment's care.
 Alas ! what idle words ; but take
 The Dirge which for our Master's sake
 And yours, love prompted me to make.
 The rhymes so homely in attire
 With learned ears may ill agree,
 But chanted by your Orphan Quire
 Will make a touching melody.

VII

DIRGE

MOURN, Shepherd, near thy old grey stone ;
 Thou Angler, by the silent flood ;

¹ Composed at Goslar, in Germany. [The village school was Hawkshead, and "Matthew" was the master in Wordsworth's early schooldays there.]

And mourn when thou art all alone,
Thou Woodman, in the distant wood !

Thou one blind Sailor, rich in joy
Though blind, thy tunes in sadness hum ;
And mourn, thou poor half-witted Boy !
Born deaf, and living deaf and dumb.

Thou drooping sick Man, bless the Guide
Who checked or turned thy headstrong youth,
As he before had sanctified
Thy infancy with heavenly truth.

Ye Striplings, light of heart and gay,
Bold settlers on some foreign shore,
Give, when your thoughts are turned this way,
A sigh to him whom we deplore.

For us who here in funeral strain
With one accord our voices raise,
Let sorrow overcharged with pain
Be lost in thankfulness and praise.

And when our hearts shall feel a sting
From ill we meet or good we miss,
May touches of his memory bring
Fond healing, like a mother's kiss.

(1799)

VIII

BY THE SIDE OF THE GRAVE SOME YEARS
AFTER

LONG time his pulse hath ceased to beat
But benefits, his gifts, we trace—
Expressed in every eye we meet
Round this dear Vale, his native place

To stately Hall and Cottage rude
Flowed from his life what still they hold,
Light pleasures, every day, renewed ;
And blessings half a century old.

Oh true of heart, of spirit gay,
Thy faults, where not already gone
From memory, prolong their stay
For charity's sweet sake alone.

To a Sexton

Such solace find we for our loss ;
 And what beyond this thought we crave
 Comes in the promise from the Cross,
 Shining upon thy happy grave.

TO A SEXTON¹

LET thy wheel-barrow alone—
 Wherefore, Sexton, piling still
 In thy bone-house bone on bone ?
 'Tis already like a hill
 In a field of battle made,
 Where three thousand skulls are laid ;
 These died in peace each with the other,—
 Father, sister, friend, and brother.

Mark the spot to which I point !
 From this platform, eight feet square,
 Take not even a finger-joint :
 Andrew's whole fire-side is there.
 Here, alone, before thine eyes,
 Simon's sickly daughter lies,
 From weakness now, and pain defended.
 Whom he twenty winters tended.

Look but at the gardener's pride—
 How he glories, when he sees
 Roses, lilies, side by side,
 Violets in families !
 By the heart of Man, his tears,
 By his hopes and by his tears,
 Thou, too heedless, art the Warden
 Of a far superior garden.

Thus then, each to other dear,
 Let them all in quiet lie,
 Andrew there, and Susan here,
 Neighbours in mortality.
 And, should I live through sun and rain
 Seven widowed years without my Jane,
 O Sexton, do not then remove her,
 Let one grave hold the Loved and Lover

THE DANISH BOY

A FRAGMENT¹

I

BETWEEN two sister moorland rills
 There is a spot that seems to lie
 Sacred to flowerets of the hills,
 And sacred to the sky:
 And in this smooth and open dell
 There is a tempest-stricken tree ;
 A corner-stone by lightning cut,
 The last stone of a lonely hut ;
 And in this dell you see
 A thing no storm can e'er destroy,
 The shadow of a Danish Boy.

In clouds above, the lark is heard,
 But drops not here to earth for rest ;
 Within this lonesome nook the bird
 Did never build her nest.
 No beast, no bird hath here his home ;
 Bees, wafted on the breezy air,
 Pass high above those fragrant bells
 To other flowers :—to other dells
 Their burthens do they bear ;
 The Danish Boy walks here alone :
 The lovely dell is all his own.

III

A Spirit of noon-day is he ;
 Yet seems a form of flesh and blood ;
 Nor piping shepherd shall he be,
 Nor herd-boy of the wood.
 A regal vest of fur he wears,
 In colour like a raven's wing ;
 It fears not rain, nor wind, nor dew ;
 But in the storm 'tis fresh and blue
 As budding pines in spring ;
 His helmet has a vernal grace,
 Fresh as the bloom upon his face.

¹ Written in Germany. It was entirely a fancy ; but intended as a prelude to a ballad-poem never written.

IV

A harp is from his shoulder slung ;
 Resting the harp upon his knee,
 To words of a forgotten tongue
 He suits its melody.
 Of flocks upon the neighbouring hill
 He is the darling and the joy ;
 And often, when no cause appears,
 The mountain-ponies prick their ears,
 —They hear the Danish Boy,
 While in the dell he sings alone
 Beside the tree and corner-stone.

There sits he ; in his face you spy
 No trace of a ferocious air,
 Nor ever was a cloudless sky
 So steady or so fair.
 The lovely Danish Boy is blest
 And happy in his flowery cove :
 From bloody deeds his thoughts are far ;
 And yet he warbles songs of war,
 That seem like songs of love,
 For calm and gentle is his mien ;
 Like a dead Boy he is serene.

(1799)

LUCY GRAY¹

OR, SOLITUDE

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray :
 And, when I crossed the wild,
 I chanced to see at break of day
 The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew ;
 She dwelt on a wide moor,
 —The sweetest thing that ever grew
 Beside a human door !

¹ Written at Goslar in Germany. It was founded on a circumstance told me by my Sister, of a little girl who, not far from Halifax in Yorkshire, was bewildered in a snow-storm. Her footsteps were traced by her parents to the middle of the lock of a canal, and no other vestige of her, backward or forward, could be traced. The body however was found in the canal.

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green ;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

“To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go ;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow.”

“That, Father ! will I gladly do :
’Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon !”

At this the Father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band ;
He plied his work ;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe :
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time :
She wandered up and down ;
And many a hill did Lucy climb :
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide ;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor ;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept—and, turning homeward, cried,
“In heaven we all shall meet ;”
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy’s feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill’s edge
They tracked the footmarks small ;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall ;

And then an open field they crossed :
The marks were still the same ;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost ;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank ;
And further there were none !

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child ;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind ;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

(1799)

RUTH¹

WHEN Ruth was left half desolate,
Her Father took another Mate ;
And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill,
In thoughtless freedom, bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And music from that pipe could draw
Like sounds of winds and floods ;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.

Beneath her father's roof, alone
She seemed to live ; her thoughts her own ;
Herself her own delight ;
Pleased with herself, nor sad, nor gay ;
And, passing thus the live-long day,
She grew to woman's height.

¹ Written in Germany. Suggested by an account I had of wanderer in Somersetshire.

There came a Youth from Georgia's shore—
A military casque he wore,
With splendid feathers drest ;
He brought them from the Cherokees ;
The feathers nodded in the breeze,
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung :
But no ! he spake the English tongue,
And bore a soldier's name ;
And, when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy,
He 'cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek
In finest tones the Youth could speak :
—While he was yet a boy,
The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run,
Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely Youth ! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he ;
And, when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought,
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear ;
Such tales as told to any maid
By such a Youth, in the green shade
Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls—a happy rout !
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
Their pleasant Indian town,
To gather strawberries all day long ;
Returning with a choral song
When daylight is gone down.

He spake of plants that hourly change
Their blossoms, through a boundless range
Of intermingling hues ;
With budding, fading, faded flowers
They stand the wonder of the bowers
From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia, spread
High as a cloud, high over head !
The cypress and her spire ;
—Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
To set the hills on fire.

The Youth of green savannahs spake,
And many an endless, endless lake,
With all its fairy crowds
Of islands, that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds.

“How pleasant,” then he said, “it were
A fisher or a hunter there,
In sunshine or in shade
To wander with an easy mind ;
And build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade !

“What days and what bright years ! Ah me
Our life were life indeed, with thee
So passed in quiet bliss,
And all the while,” said he, “to know
That we were in a world of woe,
On such an earth as this !”

And then he sometimes interwove
Fond thoughts about a father’s love ;
“For there,” said he, “are spun
Around the heart such tender ties,
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

“Sweet Ruth ! and could you go with me
My helpmate in the woods to be,
Our shed at night to rear ;
Or run, my own adopted bride,
A sylvan huntress at my side,
And drive the flying deer !

“Belovèd Ruth !”—No more he said,
The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
A solitary tear :
She thought again—and did agree
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer.

"And now, as fitting is and right,
We in the church our faith will plight,
A husband and a wife."

Even so they did ; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think
That on those lonesome floods,
And green savannahs, she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This Stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And, with his dancing crest,
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roamed about, with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the West.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky,
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a Youth to whom was given
So much of earth—so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seemed allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of nature wrought,
Fair trees and gorgeous flowers ;
The breezes their own languor lent ;
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those favoured bowers.

Yet, in his worst pursuits, I ween
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent :
For passions linked to forms so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw,
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known ;
Deliberately, and undeceived,
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impaired, and he became
The slave of low desires :
A Man who without self-control
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feigned delight
Had wooed the Maiden, day and night
Had loved her, night and morn :
What could he less than love a Maid
Whose heart with so much nature played ?
So kind and so forlorn !

Sometimes, most earnestly, he said,
" O Ruth ! I have been worse than dead :
False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain,
Encompassed me on every side
When I, in confidence and pride,
Had crossed the Atlantic main.

" Before me shone a glorious world—
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled
To music suddenly:
I looked upon those hills and plains,
And seemed as if let loose from chains,
To live at liberty.

" No more of this ; for now, by thee,
Dear Ruth ! more happily set free
With nobler zeal I burn ;
My soul from darkness is released,
Like the whole sky when to the east
The morning doth return."

Full soon that better mind was gone ;
No hope, no wish remained, not one,—
They stirred him now no more ;
New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wished to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore,
But, when they thither came the Youth
Deserted his poor Bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth !—Such pains she had,
That she in half a year was mad,
And in a prison housed ;
And there, with many a doleful song
Made of wild words, her cup of wrong
She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May ;
—They all were with her in her cell ;
And a clear brook with cheerful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
There came a respite to her pain ;
She from her prison fled ;
But of the Vagrant none took thought ;
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread.

Among the fields she breathed again :
The master-current of her brain
Ran permanent and free ;
And, coming to the Banks of Tone,
There did she rest ; and dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves—she loved them still ;
Nor ever taxed them with the ill
Which had been done to her.

A Barn her *winter* bed supplies ;
But, till the warmth of summer skies
And summer days is gone,
(And all do in this tale agree)
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
And other home hath none.

Written in Germany

An innocent life, yet far astray !
 And Ruth will, long before her day,
 Be broken down and old :
 Sore aches she needs must have ! but less
 Of mind, than body's wretchedness,
 From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is prest by want of food,
 She from her dwelling in the wood
 Repairs to a road-side ;
 And there she begs at one steep place
 Where up and down with easy pace
 The horsemen-travellers ride.

That oaten pipe of hers is mute,
 Or thrown away ; but with a flute
 Her loneliness she cheers :
 This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
 At evening in his homeward walk
 The Quantock woodman hears.

I, too, have passed her on the hills
 Setting her little water-mills
 By spouts and fountains wild—
 Such small machinery as she turned
 Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
 A young and happy Child !

Farewell ! and when thy days are told,
 Ill-fated Ruth, in hallowed mould
 Thy corpse shall buried be,
 For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
 And all the congregation sing
 A Christian psalm for thee.

(1799)

WRITTEN IN GERMANY

ON ONE OF THE COLDEST DAYS OF THE CENTURY¹

A PLAGUE on your languages, German and Norse !
 Let me have the song of the kettle ;
 And the tongs and the poker, instead of that horse
 That gallops away with such fury and force
 On this dreary dull plate of black metal.

¹ A bitter winter it was when these verses were composed by the side of my Sister, in our lodgings at a draper's house in the romantic imperial town of Goslar, on the edge of the Harz Forest. In this town the German emperors of the Franconian line were accustomed to keep their court, and it retains vestiges of ancient splendour. So severe was

See that Fly,—a disconsolate creature ! perhaps
A child of the field or the grove ;
And, sorrow for him ! the dull treacherous heat
Has seduced the poor fool from his winter retreat,
And he creeps to the edge of my stove.

Alas ! how he fumbles about the domains
Which this comfortless oven environ !
He cannot find out in what track he must crawl,
Now back to the tiles, then in search of the wall,
And now on the brink of the iron.

Stock-still there he stands like a traveller bemazed ;
The best of his skill he has tried ;
His feelers, methinks, I can see him put forth
To the east and the west, to the south and the north ;
But he finds neither guide-post nor guide.

His spindle sink under him, foot, leg, and thigh !
His eyesight and hearing are lost ;
Between life and death his blood freezes and thaws ;
And his two pretty pinions of blue dusky gauze
Are glued to his sides by the frost.

No brother, no mate has he near him—while I
Can draw warmth from the cheek of my Love ;
As blest and as glad, in this desolate gloom,
As if green summer grass were the floor of my room,
And woodbines were hanging above.

Yet, God is my witness, thou small helpless Thing !
Thy life I would gladly sustain
Till summer come up from the south, and with crowds
Of thy brethren a march thou should'st sound through the
clouds,

And back to the forests again !

(1799)

the cold of this winter, that when we passed out of the parlour warmed by the stove, our cheeks were struck by the air as by cold iron. I slept in a room over a passage which was not ceiled. The people of the house used to say, rather unfeelingly, that they expected I should be frozen to death some night ; but, with the protection of a pelisse lined with fur, and a dog's-skin bonnet, such as was worn by the peasants, I walked daily on the ramparts, or in a sort of public ground or garden, in which was a pond. Here, I had no companion but a kingfisher, a beautiful creature, that used to glance by me. I consequently became much attached to it. During these walks I composed the poem that follows.

The Reader must be apprised, that the Stoves in North-Germany generally have the impression of a galloping horse upon them, this being part of the Brunswick Arms.

THE IDLE SHEPHERD-BOYS¹OR, DUNGEON-GHYLL FORCE²

A PASTORAL

THE valley rings with mirth and joy ;
 Among the hills the echoes play
 A never never ending song,
 To welcome in the May.
 The magpie chatters with delight ;
 The mountain raven's youngling brood
 Have left the mother and the nest ;
 And they go rambling east and west
 In search of their own food ;
 Or through the glittering vapours dart
 In very wantonness of heart.

Beneath a rock, upon the grass,
 Two boys are sitting in the sun ;
 Their work, if any work they have,
 Is out of mind—or done.
 On pipes of sycamore they play
 The fragments of a Christmas hymn ;
 Or with that plant which in our dale
 We call stag-horn, or fox's tail,
 Their rusty hats they trim :
 And thus, as happy as the day,
 Those Shepherds wear the time away.

Along the river's stony marge
 The sand-lark chants a joyous song ;
 The thrush is busy in the wood,
 And carols loud and strong.
 A thousand lambs are on the rocks,
 All newly born ! both earth and sky
 Keep jubilee, and more than all,
 Those boys with their green coronal ;
 They never hear the cry,
 That plaintive cry ! which up the hill
 Comes from the depth of Dungeon-Ghyll.

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere.

² *Ghyll*, in the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland, is a short and, for the most part, a steep narrow valley, with a stream running through it. *Force* is the word universally employed in these dialects for waterfall.

Said Walter, leaping from the ground,
 "Down to the stump of yon old yew
 We'll for our whistles run a race."

—Away the shepherds flew ;
 They leapt—they ran—and when they came
 Right opposite to Dungeon-Ghyll,
 Seeing that he should lose the prize,
 "Stop !" to his comrade Walter cries—
 James stopped with no good will :
 Said Walter then, exulting ; "Here
 You'll find a task for half a year.

"Cross, if you dare, where I shall cross—
 Come on, and tread where I shall tread."
 The other took him at his word,
 And followed as he led.
 It was a spot which you may see
 If ever you to Langdale go ;
 Into a chasm a mighty block
 Hath fallen, and made a bridge of rock :
 The gulf is deep below ;
 And, in a basin black and small,
 Receives a lofty waterfall.

With staff in hand across the cleft
 The challenger pursued his march ;
 And now, all eyes and feet, hath gained
 The middle of the arch.
 When list ! he hears a piteous moan—
 Again !—his heart within him dies—
 His pulse is stopped, his breath is lost,
 He totters, pallid as a ghost,
 And, looking down, espies
 A lamb, that in the pool is pent
 Within that black and frightful rent.

The lamb had slipped into the stream,
 And safe without a bruise or wound
 The cataract had borne him down
 Into the gulf profound.
 His dam had seen him when he fell,
 She saw him down the torrent borne ;
 And, while with all a mother's love
 She from the lofty rocks above
 Sent forth a cry forlorn,
 The lamb, still swimming round and round,
 Made answer to that plaintive sound.

The Pet-Lamb

When he had learnt what thing it was,
 That sent this rueful cry ; I ween
 The Boy recovered heart, and told
 The sight which he had seen.
 Both gladly now deferred their task ;
 Nor was there wanting other aid—
 A Poet, one who loves the brooks
 Far better than the sages' books,
 By chance had thither strayed ;
 And there the helpless lamb he found
 By those huge rocks encompassed round.
 He drew it from the troubled pool,
 And brought it forth into the light :
 The Shepherds met him with his charge,
 An unexpected sight !
 Into their arms the lamb they took,
 Whose life and limbs the flood had spared ;
 Then up the steep ascent they hied,
 And placed him at his mother's side ;
 And gently did the Bard
 Those idle Shepherd-boys upbraid,
 And bade them better mind their trade.

(1800)

THE PET-LAMB¹

A PASTORAL

THE dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink ;
 I heard a voice ; it said, " Drink, pretty creature, drink !"
 And, looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied
 A snow-white mountain-lamb with a Maiden at its side.
 Nor sheep nor kine were near ; the lamb was all alone,
 And by a slender cord was tethered to a stone ;
 With one knee on the grass did the little Maiden kneel,
 While to that mountain-lamb she gave its evening meal.
 The lamb, while from her hand he thus his supper took,
 Seemed to feast with head and ears ; and his tail with
 pleasure shook.
 " Drink, pretty creature, drink," she said in such a tone
 That I almost received her heart into my own.
 'Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty rare !
 I watched them with delight, they were a lovely pair.
 Now with her empty can the Maiden turned away :
 But ere ten yards were gone her footsteps did she stay.

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere.

Right towards the lamb she looked ; and from a shady place
I unobserved could see the workings of her face :
If Nature to her tongue could measured numbers bring,
Thus, thought I, to her lamb that little Maid might sing :

“ What ails thee, young One ? what ? Why pull so at thy
cord ?

Is it not well with thee ? well both for bed and board ?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be ;
Rest, little young One, rest ; what is't that aileth thee ?

“ What is it thou wouldst seek ? What is wanting to thy
heart ?

Thy limbs are they not strong ? And beautiful thou art :
This grass is tender grass ; these flowers they have no peers ;
And that green corn all day is rustling in thy ears !

“ If the sun be shining hot, do but stretch thy woollen
chain,

This beech is standing by, its covert thou canst gain ;
For rain and mountain-storms ! the like thou need'st not
fear,

The rain and storm are things that scarcely can come here.

“ Rest, little young One, rest ; thou hast forgot the day
When my father found thee first in places far away ;
Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wert owned by
none,

And thy mother from thy side for evermore was gone.

“ He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee home :
A blessed day for thee ! then whither wouldst thou roam ?
A faithful nurse thou hast ; the dam that did thee yearn
Upon the mountain-tops no kinder could have been.

“ Thou know'st that twice a day I have brought thee in this
can

Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever ran ;
And twice in the day, when the ground is wet with dew,
I bring thee draughts of milk, warm milk it is and new.

“ Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as they are now,
Then I'll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in the plough ;
My playmate thou shalt be ; and when the wind is cold
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be thy fold.

“ It will not, will not rest !—Poor creature, can it be
That 'tis thy mother's heart which is working so in thee ?
Things that I know not of belike to thee are dear,
And dreams of things which thou canst neither see nor hear.

76 Poems on the Naming of Places

"Alas, the mountain-tops that look so green and fair !
I've heard of fearful winds and darkness that come there ;
The little brooks that seem all pastime and all play,
When they are angry, roar like lions for their prey.

"Here thou need'st not dread the raven in the sky ;
Night and day thou art safe,—our cottage is hard by.
Why bleat so after me ? Why pull so at thy chain ?
Sleep—and at break of day I will come to thee again !"

—As homeward through the lane I went with lazy feet,
This song to myself did I oftentimes repeat ;
And it seemed, as I retraced the ballad line by line,
That but half of it was hers, and one half of it was *mine*.

Again, and once again, did I repeat the song ;
"Nay," said I, "more than half to the damsel must belong,
For she looked with such a look and she spake with such a
tone,

That I almost received her heart into my own."

(1800)

POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES

I

"IT WAS AN APRIL MORNING"¹

It was an April morning : fresh and clear
The Rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed ; and yet the voice
Of waters which the winter had supplied
Was softened down into a vernal tone.
The spirit of enjoyment and desire,
And hopes and wishes, from all living things
Went circling, like a multitude of sounds.
The budding groves seemed eager to urge on
The steps of June ; as if their various hues
Were only hindrances that stood between
Them and their object : but, meanwhile, prevailed
Such an entire contentment in the air
That every naked ash, and tardy tree
Yet leafless, showed as if the countenance
With which it looked on this delightful day
Were native to the summer.—Up the brook

¹ Written at Grasmere. This poem was suggested on the banks of the brook that runs through Easedale, which is, in some parts of its course, as wild and beautiful as brook can be. I have composed thousands of verses by the side of it.

Poems on the Naming of Places 77

I roamed in the confusion of my heart,
Alive to all things and forgetting all.
At length I to a sudden turning came
In this continuous glen, where down a rock
The Stream, so ardent in its course before,
Sent forth such sallies of glad sound, that all
Which I till then had heard, appeared the voice
Of common pleasure : beast and bird, the lamb,
The shepherd's dog, the linnet and the thrush
Vied with this waterfall, and made a song,
Which, while I listened, seemed like the wild growth
Or like some natural produce of the air,
That could not cease to be. Green leaves were here ;
But 'twas the foliage of the rocks—the birch,
The yew, the holly, and the bright green thorn,
With hanging islands of resplendent furze :
And, on a summit, distant a short space,
By any who should look beyond the dell,
A single mountain-cottage might be seen.
I gazed and gazed, and to myself I said,
“ Our thoughts at least are ours ; and this wild nook,
My EMMA, I will dedicate to thee.”
—Soon did the spot become my other home,
My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
And, of the Shepherds who have seen me there,
To whom I sometimes in our idle talk
Have told this fancy, two or three, perhaps,
Years after we are gone and in our graves,
When they have cause to speak of this wild place,
May call it by the name of EMMA'S DELL.
(1800)

TO JOANNA¹

AMID the smoke of cities did you pass
The time of early youth ; and there you learned,
From years of quiet industry, to love
The living Beings by your own fireside,
With such a strong devotion, that your heart
Is slow to meet the sympathies of them
Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
And make dear friendships with the streams and groves.
Yet we, who are transgressors in this kind,
Dwelling retired in our simplicity

¹ Written at Grasmere.

78 Poems on the Naming of Places

Among the woods and fields, we love you well,
 Joanna ! and I guess, since you have been
 So distant from us now for two long years,
 That you will gladly listen to discourse,
 However trivial, if you thence be taught
 That they, with whom you once were happy, talk
 Familiarly of you and of old times.

While I was seated, now some ten days past,
 Beneath those lofty firs, that overtop
 Their ancient neighbour, the old steeple-tower,
 The Vicar from his gloomy house hard by
 Came forth to greet me ; and when he had asked,
 " How fares Joanna, that wild-hearted Maid !
 And when will she return to us ? " he paused ;
 And, after short exchange of village news,
 He with grave looks demanded, for what cause,
 Reviving obsolete idolatry,
 I, like a Runic Priest, in characters
 Of formidable size had chiselled out
 Some uncouth name upon the native rock,
 Above the Rotha, by the forest-side.
 —Now, by those dear immunities of heart
 Engendered between malice and true love,
 I was not loth to be so catechised,
 And this was my reply :—" As it befell,
 One summer morning we had walked abroad
 At break of day, Joanna and myself.
 —'Twas that delightful season when the broom,
 Full-flowered, and visible on every steep,
 Along the copses runs in veins of gold.
 Our pathway led us on to Rotha's banks ;
 And when we came in front of that tall rock
 That eastward looks, I there stopped short—and stood
 Tracing the lofty barrier with my eye
 From base to summit ; such delight I found
 To note in shrub and tree, in stone and flower
 That intermixture of delicious hues,
 Along so vast a surface, all at once,
 In one impression, by connecting force
 Of their own beauty, imaged in the heart.
 —When I had gazed perhaps two minutes' space,
 Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
 That ravishment of mine, and laughed aloud.
 The Rock, like something starting from a sleep,
 Took up the Lady's voice, and laughed again ;

That ancient Woman seated on Helm-crag
 Was ready with her cavern ; Hammar-scar,
 And the tall Steep of Silver-how, sent forth
 A noise of laughter ; southern Loughrigg heard,
 And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone ;
 Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
 Carried the Lady's voice,—old Skiddaw blew
 His speaking-trumpet ;—back out of the clouds
 Of Glaramara southward came the voice ;
 And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty head.
 —Now whether (said I to our cordial Friend,
 Who in the hey-day of astonishment
 Smiled in my face) this were in simple truth
 A work accomplished by the brotherhood
 Of ancient mountains, or my ear was touched
 With dreams and visionary impulses
 To me alone imparted, sure I am
 That there was a loud uproar in the hills.
 And, while we both were listening, to my side
 The fair Joanna drew, as if she wished
 To shelter from some object of her fear.
 —And hence, long afterwards, when eighteen moons
 Were wasted, as I chanced to walk alone
 Beneath this rock, at sunrise, on a calm
 And silent morning, I sat down, and there,
 In memory of affections old and true,
 I chiselled out in those rude characters
 Joanna's name deep in the living stone :—
 And I, and all who dwell by my fireside,
 Have called the lovely rock, JOANNA'S ROCK."

(1800)

III ¹

"THERE IS AN EMINENCE"

THERE is an Eminence,—of these our hills
 The last that parleys with the setting sun ;
 We can behold it from our orchard-seat ;
 And, when at evening we pursue our walk
 Along the public way, this Peak, so high
 Above us, and so distant in its height,
 Is visible ; and often seems to send
 Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.

¹ It is not accurate that the Eminence here alluded to could be seen from our orchard-seat. It rises above the road by the side of Giasmere lake, towards Keswick, and its name is Stone-Arthur.

80 Poems on the Naming of Places

The meteors make of it a favourite haunt :
 The star of Jove, so beautiful and large
 In the mid heavens, is never half so fair
 As when he shines above it. 'Tis in truth
 The loneliest place we have among the clouds.
 And She who dwells with me, whom I have loved
 With such communion, that no place on earth
 Can ever be a solitude to me,
 Hath to this lonely Summit given my Name.
 (1800)

IV¹

"POINT RASH-JUDGMENT"

A NARROW girdle of rough stones and crags,
 A rude and natural causeway, interposed
 Between the water and a winding slope
 Of copse and thicket, leaves the eastern shore
 Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy :
 And there myself and two beloved Friends,
 One calm September morning, ere the mist
 Had altogether yielded to the sun,
 Sauntered on this retired and difficult way.
 —Ill suits the road with one in haste ; but 'we
 Played with our time ; and, as we strolled along,
 It was our occupation to observe
 Such objects as the waves had tossed ashore—
 Feather, or leaf, or weed, or withered bough,
 Each on the other heaped, along the line
 Of the dry wreck. And, in our vacant mood,
 Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
 Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
 That skimmed the surface of the dead calm lake,
 Suddenly halting now—a lifeless stand !
 And starting off again with freak as sudden ;
 In all its sportive wanderings, all the while,
 Making report of an invisible breeze
 That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
 Its playmate, rather say, its moving soul.
 —And often, trifling with a privilege
 Alike indulged to all, we paused, one now,
 And now the other, to point out, perchance

¹ The character of the eastern shore of Grasmere lake is quite changed, since these verses were written, by the public road being carried along its side. The friends spoken of were Coleridge and my Sister, and the facts occurred strictly as recorded.

Poems on the Naming of Places 81

To pluck, some flower or water-weed, too fair
Either to be divided from the place
On which it grew, or to be left alone
To its own beauty. Many such there are,
Fair ferns and flowers, and chiefly that tall fern,
So stately, of the queen Osmunda named ;
Plant lovelier, in its own retired abode
On Grasmere's beach, than Naiad by the side
Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere,
Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.
—So fared we that bright morning ; from the fields
Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy mirth
Of reapers, men and women, boys and girls.
Delighted much to listen to those sounds,
And feeding thus our fancies, we advanced
Along the indented shore ; when suddenly,
Through a thin veil of glittering haze was seen
Before us, on a point of jutting land,
The tall and upright figure of a Man
Attired in peasant's garb, who stood alone,
Angling beside the margin of the lake.
" Improvident and reckless," we exclaimed,
" The Man must be, who thus can lose a day
Of the mid harvest, when the labourer's hire
Is ample, and some little might be stored
Wherewith to cheer him in the winter time."
Thus talking of that Peasant, we approached
Close to the spot where with his rod and line
He stood alone ; whereat he turned his head
To greet us—and we saw a Man worn down
By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks
And wasted limbs, his legs so long and lean
That for my single self I looked at them,
Forgetful of the body they sustained.—
Too weak to labour in the harvest field,
The Man was using his best skill to gain
A pittance from the dead unfeeling lake
That knew not of his wants. I will not say
What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
With all its lovely images, was changed
To serious musing and to self-reproach.
Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
What need there is to be reserved in speech,
And temper all our thoughts with charity.

82 The Waterfall and the Eglantine

—Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,
My Friend, Myself, and She who then received
The same admonishment, have called the place
By a memorial name, uncouth indeed
As e'er by mariner was given to bay
Or foreland, on a new-discovered coast ;
And POINT RASH-JUDGMENT is the name it bears.
(1800)

v¹

TO M. H.

OUR walk was far among the ancient trees :
There was no road, nor any woodman's path ;
But a thick umbrage—checking the wild growth
Of weed and sapling, along soft green turf
Beneath the branches—of itself had made
A track, that brought us to a slip of lawn,
And a small bed of water in the woods.
All round this pool both flocks and herds might drink
On its firm margin, even as from a well,
Or some stone-basin which the herdsman's hand
Had shaped for their refreshment ; nor did sun,
Or wind from any quarter, ever come,
But as a blessing to this calm recess,
This glade of water and this one green field.
The spot was made by Nature for herself ;
The travellers know it not, and 'twill remain
Unknown to them ; but it is beautiful ;
And if a man should plant his cottage near,
Should sleep beneath the shelter of its trees,
And blend its waters with his daily meal,
He would so love it, that in his death-hour
Its image would survive among his thoughts :
And therefore, my sweet MARY, this still Nook,
With all its beeches, we have named from You !
(1800)

THE WATERFALL AND THE EGLANTINE²

I

“BEGONE, thou fond presumptuous Elf,”
Exclaimed an angry Voice,

¹ The pool alluded to is in Rydal Upper Park.

² Suggested nearer to Grasmere, on the same mountain track as that referred to in the following Note [p. 84]. The Eglantine remained many years afterwards, but is now gone.

The Waterfall and the Eglantine 83

"Nor dare to thrust thy foolish self
Between me and my choice!"
A small Cascade fresh swoln with snows
Thus threatened a poor Briar-rose,
That, all bespattered with his foam,
And dancing high and dancing low,
Was living, as a child might know,
In an unhappy home.

"Dost thou presume my course to block?
Off, off! or, puny Thing!
I'll hurl thee headlong with the rock
To which thy fibres cling."
The Flood was tyrannous and strong;
The patient Briar suffered long,
Nor did he utter groan or sigh,
Hoping the danger would be past;
But, seeing no relief, at last,
He ventured to reply.

III

"Ah!" said the Briar, "blame me not;
Why should we dwell in strife?
We who in this sequestered spot
Once lived a happy life!
You stirred me on my rocky bed—
What pleasure through my veins you spread
The summer long, from day to day,
My leaves you freshened and bedewed;
Nor was it common gratitude
That did your cares repay.

IV

"When spring came on with bud and bell,
Among these rocks did I.
Before you hang my wreaths to tell
That gentle days were nigh!
And in the sultry summer hours,
I sheltered you with leaves and flowers;
And in my leaves—now shed and gone,
The linnet lodged, and for us two
Chanted his pretty songs, when you
Had little voice or none.

V

"But now proud thoughts are in your breast—
 What grief is mine you see,
 Ah! would you think, even yet how blest
 Together we might be!
 Though of both leaf and flower bereft,
 Some ornaments to me are left—
 Rich store of scarlet hips is mine,
 With which I, in my humble way,
 Would deck you many a winter day,
 A happy Eglantine!"

VI

What more he said I cannot tell,
 The Torrent down the rocky dell
 Came thundering loud and fast;
 I listened, nor aught else could hear;
 The Briar quaked—and much I fear
 Those accents were his last.

(1800)

THE OAK AND THE BROOM¹

A PASTORAL

I

His simple truths did Andrew glean
 Beside the babbling rills;
 A careful student he had been
 Among the woods and hills.
 One winter's night, when through the trees
 The wind was roaring, on his knees
 His youngest born did Andrew hold:
 And while the rest, a ruddy quire,
 Were seated round their blazing fire,
 This Tale the Shepherd told.

II

"I saw a crag, a lofty stone
 As ever tempest beat!
 Out of its head an Oak had grown,
 A Broom out of its feet.
 The time was March, a cheerful noon—
 The thaw-wind, with the breath of June,

¹ Suggested upon the mountain pathway that leads from Upper Rydal to Grasmere. The ponderous block of stone which is mentioned in the poem remains, I believe, to this day, a good way up Nab-Scar. Broom grows under it, and in many places on the side of the precipice.

Breathed gently from the warm south-west :
When, in a voice sedate with age,
This Oak, a giant and a sage,
His neighbour thus addressed :—

III

“ ‘ Eight weary weeks, through rock and clay,
Along this mountain’s edge,
The Frost hath wrought both night and day,
Wedge driving after wedge.
Look up ! and think, above your head
What trouble, surely, will be bred ;
Last night I heard a crash—’tis true,
The splinters took another road—
I see them yonder—what a load
For such a Thing as you !

IV

“ ‘ You are preparing as before,
To deck your slender shape ;
And yet, just three years back—no more—
You had a strange escape :
Down from yon cliff a fragment broke ;
It thundered down, with fire and smoke,
And hitherward pursued its way ;
This ponderous block was caught by me,
And o’er your head, as you may see,
’Tis hanging to this day !

V

“ ‘ If breeze or bird to this rough steep
Your kind’s first seed did bear ;
The breeze had better been asleep,
The bird caught in a snare :
For you and your green twigs decoy
The little witless shepherd-boy
To come and slumber in your bower ;
And, trust me, on some sultry noon,
Both you and he, Heaven knows how soon !
Will perish in one hour.

VI

“ ‘ From me this friendly warning take ’—
The Broom began to doze,
And thus, to keep herself awake,
Did gently interpose :

'My thanks for your discourse are due ;
That more than what you say is true,
I know, and I have known it long ;
Frail is the bond by which we hold
Our being, whether young or old,
Wise, foolish, weak, or strong.

VII

" 'Disasters, do the best we can,
Will reach both great and small ;
And he is oft the wisest man,
Who is not wise at all.
For me, why should I wish to roam ?
This spot is my paternal home,
It is my pleasant heritage ;
My father many a happy year,
Spread here his careless blossoms, here
Attained a good old age.

VIII

" 'Even such as his may be my lot.
What cause have I to haunt
My heart with terrors ? Am I not
In truth a favoured plant !
On me such bounty Summer pours,
That I am covered o'er with flowers ;
And, when the Frost is in the sky,
My branches are so fresh and gay,
That you might look at me and say,
This Plant can never die.

IX

" 'The butterfly, all green and gold,
To me hath often flown,
Here in my blossoms to behold
Wings lovely as his own.
When grass is chill with rain or dew,
Beneath my shade, the mother-cow
Lies with her infant lamb ; I see
The love they to each other make,
And the sweet joy which they partake,
It is a joy to me.'

X

" Her voice was blithe, her heart was light ;
The Broom might have pursued

Her speech, until the stars of night
Their journey had renewed ;
But in the branches of the oak
Two ravens now began to croak
Their nuptial song, a gladsome air ;
And to her own green bower the breeze
That instant brought two stripling bees
To rest, or murmur there.

XI

“One night, my Children ! from the north
There came a furious blast ;
At break of day I ventured forth,
And near the cliff I passed.
The storm had fallen upon the Oak,
And struck him with a mighty stroke,
And whirled, and whirled him far away ;
And, in one hospitable cleft,
The little careless Broom was left
To live for many a day.”

(1800)

HART-LEAP WELL¹

THE Knight had ridden down from Wensley Moor
With the slow motion of a summer's cloud,
And now, as he approached a vassal's door,
“Bring forth another horse !” he cried aloud.

“Another horse !”—That shout the vassal heard
And saddled his best Steed, a comely grey ;
Sir Walter mounted him ; he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.
Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes ;
The horse and horseman are a happy pair ;
But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's Hall,
That as they galloped made the echoes roar ;
But horse and man are vanished, one and all ;
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere. Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water, about five miles from Richmond in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road that leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable Chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second Part of the following Poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.

Hart-Leap Well

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain :
Blanch, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and up the weary mountain strain.

The Knight hallooed, he cheered and chid them on
With suppliant gestures and upbraidings stern ;
But breath and eyesight fail ; and, one by one,
The dogs are stretched among the mountain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the race ?
The bugles that so joyfully were blown ?
—This chase it looks not like an earthly chase ;
Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor Hart toils along the mountain-side ;
I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
Nor will I mention by what death he died ;
But now the Knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting, then, he leaned against a thorn :
He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy :
He neither cracked his whip, nor blew his horn,
But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter leaned,
Stood his dumb partner in this glorious feat ;
Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned ;
And white with foam as if with cleaving sleet.

Upon his side the Hart was lying stretched :
His nostril touched a spring beneath a hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath had fetched
The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
(Never had living man such joyful lot !)
Sir Walter walked all round, north, south, and west,
And gazed and gazed upon that darling spot.

And climbing up the hill—(it was at least
Four roods of sheer ascent) Sir Walter found
Three several hoof-marks which the hunted Beast
Had left imprinted on the grassy ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, "Till now
Such sight was never seen by human eyes :
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow,
Down to the very fountain where he lies.

" I'll build a pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small arbour, made for rural joy ;
'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy.

" A cunning artist will I have to frame
A basin for that fountain in the dell !
And they who do make mention of the same,
From this day forth, shall call it HART-LEAP WELL.

" And, gallant Stag ! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be raised ;
Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have grazed.

" And, in the summer-time when days are long,
I will come hither with my Paramour ;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

" Till the foundations of the mountains fail
My mansion with its arbour shall endure ;—
The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure !"

Then home he went, and left the Hart, stone-dead,
With breathless nostrils stretched above the spring.
—Soon did the Knight perform what he had said ;
And far and wide the fame thereof did ring.

Ere thrice the Moon into her port had steered,
A cup of stone received the living well ;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter reared,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall
With trailing plants and trees were intertwined,—
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were long,
Sir Walter led his wondering Paramour ;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale.

PART SECOND

THE moving accident is not my trade ;
 To freeze the blood I have no ready arts :
 'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
 To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
 It chanced that I saw standing in a dell
 Three aspens at three corners of a square ;
 And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine :
 And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
 I saw three pillars standing in a line,—
 The last stone-pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were grey, with neither arms nor head ;
 Half wasted the square mound of tawny green ;
 So that you just might say, as then I said,
 " Here in old time the hand of man hath been."

I looked upon the hill both far and near,
 More doleful place did never eye survey ;
 It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,
 And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
 When one, who was in shepherd's garb attired,
 Came up the hollow :—him did I accost,
 And what this place might be I then inquired.

The Shepherd stopped, and that same story told
 Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.

" A jolly place," said he, " in times of old !
 But something ails it now ; the spot is curst.

" You see these lifeless stumps of aspen wood—
 Some say that they are beeches, others elms—
 These were the bower ; and here a mansion stood,
 The finest palace of a hundred realms !

" The arbour does its own condition tell ;
 You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream ;
 But as to the great Lodge ! you might as well
 Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

" There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
 Will wet his lips within that cup of stone ;
 And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
 This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

"Some say that here a murder has been done,
And blood cries out for blood : but, for my part,
I've guessed, when I've been sitting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy Hart.

"What thoughts must through the creature's brain have past !
Even from the topmost stone, upon the steep,
Are but three bounds—and look, Sir, at this last—
O Master ! it has been a cruel leap.

"For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race ;
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the Hart might have to love this place,
And come and make his deathbed near the well.

"Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lulled by the fountain in the summer-tide ;
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wandered from his mother's side.

"In April here beneath the flowering thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols sing ;
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

"Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant shade ;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone ;
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all are gone."

"Grey-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well ;
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine :
This Beast not unobserved by Nature fell ;
His death was mourned by sympathy divine.

"The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.

"The pleasure-house is dust :—behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom ;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

"She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known ;
But at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

92 'Some have Died for Love'

"One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows, and what conceals;
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

(1800)

"TIS SAID, THAT SOME HAVE DIED
FOR LOVE"

'Tis said, that some have died for love :
And here and there a churchyard grave is found
In the cold north's unhallowed ground,
Because the wretched man himself had slain,
His love was such a grievous pain.
And there is one whom I five years have known ;
He dwells alone
Upon Helvellyn's side :
He loved—the pretty Barbara died ;
And thus he makes his moan :
Three years had Barbara in her grave been laid
When thus his moan he made :

"Oh, move, thou Cottage, from behind that oak !
Or let the aged tree uprooted lie,
That in some other way yon smoke
May mount into the sky !
The clouds pass on ; they from the heavens depart.
I look—the sky is empty space ;
I know not what I trace ;
But when I cease to look, my hand is on my heart.
"Oh ! what a weight is in these shades ! Ye leaves,
That murmur once so dear, when will it cease ?
Your sound my heart of rest bereaves,
It robs my heart of peace.
Thou Thrush, that singest loud—and loud and free,
Into yon row of willows flit,
Upon that alder sit ;
Or sing another song, or choose another tree.

"Roll back, sweet Rill ! back to thy mountain-bounds,
And there for ever be thy waters chained !
For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
That cannot be sustained ;
If still beneath that pine-tree's ragged bough
Headlong yon waterfall must come,
Oh let it then be dumb !
Be anything, sweet Rill, but that which thou art now.

"Thou Eglantine, so bright with sunny showers,
Proud as a rainbow spanning half the vale,
Thou one fair shrub, oh ! shed thy flowers,
And stir not in the gale.
For thus to see thee nodding in the air,
To see thy arch thus stretch and bend,
Thus rise and thus descend,—
Disturbs me till the sight is more than I can bear."

The Man who makes this feverish complaint
Is one of giant stature, who could dance
Equipped from head to foot in iron mail.
Ah gentle Love ! if ever thought was thine
To store up kindred hours for me, thy face
Turn from me, gentle Love ! nor let me walk
Within the sound of Emma's voice, nor know
Such happiness as I have known to-day.
(1800)

THE CHILDLESS FATHER¹

"Up, Timothy, up with your staff and away !
Not a soul in the village this morning will stay ;
The hare has just started from Hamilton's grounds,
And Skiddaw is glad with the cry of the hounds."

—Of coats and of jackets grey, scarlet, and green,
On the slopes of the pastures all colours were seen ;
With their comely blue aprons, and caps white as snow,
The girls on the hills made a holiday show.

Fresh sprigs of green box-wood, not six months before,
Filled the funeral basin² at Timothy's door ;
A coffin through Timothy's threshold had past ;
One Child did it bear, and that Child was his last.

Now fast up the dell came the noise and the fray,
The horse and the horn, and the hark ! hark away !
Old Timothy took up his staff, and he shut
With a leisurely motion the door of his hut.

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere.

² In several parts of the North of England, when a funeral takes place, a basin full of sprigs of box-wood is placed at the door of the house from which the coffin is taken up, and each person who attends the funeral ordinarily takes a sprig of this box-wood, and throws it into the grave of the deceased.

Perhaps to himself at that moment he said :
 "The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead."
 But of this in my ears not a word did he speak ;
 And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek.
 (1800)

SONG

FOR THE WANDERING JEW

THOUGH the torrents from their fountains
 Roar down many a craggy steep,
 Yet they find among the mountains
 Resting-places calm and deep.

Clouds that love through air to hasten,
 Ere the storm its fury stills,
 Helmet-like themselves will fasten
 On the heads of towering hills.

What, if through the frozen centre
 Of the Alps the Chamois bound,
 Yet he has a home to enter
 In some nook of chosen ground :

And the Sea-horse, though the ocean
 Yield him no domestic cave,
 Slumbers without sense of motion,
 Couched upon the rocking wave.

If on windy days the Raven
 Gambol like a dancing skiff,
 Not the less she loves her haven
 In the bosom of the cliff.

The fleet Ostrich, till day closes,
 Vagrant over desert sands,
 Brooding on her eggs reposes
 When chill night that care demands.

Day and night my toils redouble,
 Never nearer to the goal ;
 Night and day, I feel the trouble
 Of the Wanderer in my soul.

RURAL ARCHITECTURE¹

THERE'S George Fisher, Charles Fleming, and Reginald Shore,

Three rosy-cheeked school-boys, the highest not more
Than the height of a counsellor's bag ;
To the top of GREAT HOW² did it please them to climb :
And there they built up, without mortar or lime,
A Man on the peak of the crag.

They built him of stones gathered up as they lay :
They built him and christened him all in one day,
An urchin both vigorous and hale ;
And so without scruple they called him Ralph Jones.
Now Ralph is renowned for the length of his bones ;
The Magog of Legberthwaite dale.

Just half a week after, the wind sallied forth,
And, in anger or merriment, out of the north,
Coming on with a terrible pother,
From the peak of the crag blew the giant away.
And what did these school-boys ?—The very next day
They went and they built up another.

—Some little I've seen of blind boisterous works
By Christian disturbers more savage than Turks,
Spirits busy to do and undo :
At remembrance whereof my blood sometimes will flag ;
Then, light-hearted Boys, to the top of the crag !
And I'll build up a giant with you.

(1800)

ELLEN IRWIN

OR, THE BRAES OF KIRTLE³

FAIR Ellen Irwin, when she sate
Upon the braes of Kirtle,
Was lovely as a Grecian maid
Adorned with wreaths of myrtle ;

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere. These structures, as every one knows, are common amongst our hills, being built by shepherds, as conspicuous marks, and occasionally by boys in sport.

² Great How is a single and conspicuous hill, which rises towards the foot of Thilmere, on the western side of the beautiful dale of Legberthwaite, along the high road between Keswick and Ambleside.

³ The Kirtle is a river in the southern part of Scotland, on the banks of which the events here related took place.

Ellen Irwin

Young Adam Bruce beside her lay,
And there did they beguile the day
With love and gentle speeches,
Beneath the budding beeches.

From many knights and many squires
The Bruce had been selected ;
And Gordon, fairest of them all,
By Ellen was rejected.
Sad tidings to that noble Youth !
For it may be proclaimed with truth,
If Bruce hath loved sincerely,
That Gordon loves as dearly.

But what are Gordon's form and face,
His shattered hopes and crosses,
To them, 'mid Kirtle's pleasant braes,
Reclined on flowers and mosses ?
Alas that ever he was born !
The Gordon, couched behind a thorn,
Sees them and their caressing ;
Beholds them blest and blessing.

Proud Gordon, maddened by the thoughts
That through his brain are travelling,
Rushed forth, and at the heart of Bruce
He launched a deadly javelin !
Fair Ellen saw it as it came,
And, starting up to meet the same,
Did with her body cover
The Youth, her chosen lover.

And, falling into Bruce's arms,
Thus died the beauteous Ellen,
Thus, from the heart of her True-love,
The mortal spear repelling.
And Bruce, as soon as he had slain
The Gordon, sailed away to Spain ;
And fought with rage incessant
Against the Moorish crescent.

But many days, and many months,
And many years ensuing,
This wretched Knight did vainly seek
The death that he was wooing.

So, coming his last help to crave,
Heart-broken, upon Ellen's grave
His body he extended,
And there his sorrow ended.

Now ye, who willingly have heard
The tale I have been telling,
May in Kirkconnel churchyard view
The grave of lovely Ellen:
By Ellen's side the Bruce is laid;
And, for the stone upon his head,
May no rude hand deface it,
And its forlorn *hic jacet*!

(1800)

ANDREW JONES

I HATE that Andrew Jones; he'll breed
His children up to waste and pillage.
I wish the press-gang or the drum
With its tantara sound would come,
And sweep him from the village!

I said not this, because he loves
Through the long day to swear and tittle
But for the poor dear sake of one
To whom a foul deed he had done,
A friendless man, a travelling cripple!

For this poor crawling helpless wretch,
Some horseman who was passing by,
A penny on the ground had thrown;
But the poor cripple was alone
And could not stoop—no help was nigh.

Inch-thick the dust lay on the ground,
For it had long been droughty weather;
So with his staff the cripple wrought
Among the dust till he had brought
The half-pennies together.

It chanced that Andrew passed that way
Just at the time; and there he found
The cripple in the mid-day heat
Standing alone, and at his feet
He saw the penny on the ground.

He stopped and took the penny up :
 And when the cripple nearer drew,
 Quoth Andrew, " Under half-a-crown,
 What a man finds is all his own,
 And so, my Friend, good-day to you."

And *hence* I said, that Andrew's boys
 Will all be trained to waste and pillage ;
 And wished the press-gang, or the drum
 With its tantara sound, would come
 And sweep him from the village.

(1800)

THE TWO THIEVES ;

OR, THE LAST STAGE OF AVARICE

O *now* that the *genius* of Bewick were mine,
 And the skill which he learned on the banks of the Tyne.
 Then the Muses might deal with me just as they chose,
 For I'd take my last leave both of verse and of prose.

What feats would I work with my magical hand !
 Book-learning and books should be banished the land :
 And, for hunger and thirst and such troublesome calls,
 Every ale-house should then have a feast on its walls.

The traveller would hang his wet clothes on a chair ;
 Let them smoke, let them burn, not a straw would he care !
 For the Prodigal Son, Joseph's Dream and his sheaves,
 Oh, what would they be to my tale of two Thieves ?

The One, yet unbreeched, is not three birthdays old,
 His Grandsire that age more than thirty times told ;
 There are ninety good seasons of fair and foul weather
 Between them, and both go a-pilfering together.

With chips is the carpenter strewing his floor ?
 Is a cart-load of turf at an old woman's door ?
 Old Daniel his hand to the treasure will slide !
 And his Grandson's as busy at work by his side.

Old Daniel begins ; he stops short—and his eye,
 Through the lost look of dotage, is cunning and sly :
 'Tis a look which at this time is hardly his own,
 But tells a plain tale of the days that are flown.

He once had a heart which was moved by the wires
 Of manifold pleasures and many desires :
 And what if he cherished his purse ? 'Twas no more
 Than treading a path trod by thousands before.

'Twas a path trod by thousands ; but Daniel is one
Who went something farther than others have gone,
And now with old Daniel you see how it fares ;
You see to what end he has brought his grey hairs.

The pair sally forth hand in hand : ere the sun
Has peered o'er the beeches, their work is begun :
And yet, into whatever sin they may fall,
This child but half knows it, and that, not at all.

They hunt through the streets with deliberate tread,
And each, in his turn, becomes leader or led ;
And, wherever they carry their plots and their wiles,
Every face in the village is dimpled with smiles.

Neither checked by the rich nor the needy they roam ;
For the grey-headed Sire has a daughter at home,
Who will gladly repair all the damage that's done ;
And three, were it asked, would be rendered for one.

Old Man ! whom so oft I with pity have eyed,
I love thee, and love the sweet Boy at thy side :
Long yet may'st thou live ! for a teacher we see
That lifts up the veil of our nature in thee.
(1800)

A CHARACTER¹

I MARVEL how Nature could ever find space
For so many strange contrasts in one human face :
There's thought and no thought, and there's paleness and
bloom

And bustle and sluggishness, pleasure and gloom.

There's weakness, and strength both redundant and vain ;
Such strength as, if ever affliction and pain
Could pierce through a temper that's soft to disease,
Would be rational peace—a philosopher's ease.

There's indifference, alike when he fails or succeeds,
And attention full ten times as much as there needs ;
Pride where there's no envy, there's so much of joy ;
And mildness, and spirit both forward and coy.

There's freedom, and sometimes a diffident stare
Of shame scarcely seeming to know that she's there,
There's virtue, the title it surely may claim,
Yet wants heaven knows what to be worthy the name.

¹ The principal features are taken from that of my friend Robert Jones.

This picture from nature may seem to depart,
 Yet the Man would at once run away with your heart;
 And I for five centuries right gladly would be
 Such an odd such a kind happy creature as he.
 (1800)

INSCRIPTIONS

FOR THE SPOT WHERE THE HERMITAGE STOOD ON
 ST. HERBERT'S ISLAND, DERWENTWATER

If thou in the dear love of some one Friend
 Hast been so happy that thou know'st what thoughts
 Will sometimes in the happiness of love
 Make the heart sink, then wilt thou reverence
 This quiet spot; and, Stranger! not unmoved
 Wilt thou behold this shapeless heap of stones,
 The desolate ruins of St. Herbert's Cell.
 Here stood his threshold; here was spread the roof
 That sheltered him, a self-secluded Man,
 After long exercise in social cares
 And offices humane, intent to adore
 The Deity, with undistracted mind,
 And meditate on everlasting things,
 In utter solitude.—But he had left
 A Fellow-labourer, whom the good Man loved
 As his own soul. And, when with eye upraised
 To heaven he knelt before the crucifix,
 While o'er the lake the cataract of Lodore
 Pealed to his orisons, and when he paced
 Along the beach of this small isle and thought
 Of his Companion, he would pray that both
 (Now that their earthly duties were fulfilled)
 Might die in the same moment. Nor in vain
 So prayed he:—as our chronicles report,
 Though here the Hermit numbered his last day
 Far from St. Cuthbert his belovèd Friend,
 Those holy Men both died in the same hour.
 (1800)

II

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL UPON A STONE IN THE WALL
 OF THE HOUSE (AN OUT-HOUSE), ON THE ISLAND AT
 GRASMERE

RUDE is this Edifice, and Thou hast seen
 Buildings, albeit rude, that have maintained

Proportions more harmonious, and approached
 To closer fellowship with ideal grace.
 But take it in good part :—alas ! the poor
 Vitruvius of our village had no help
 From the great City ; never, upon leaves
 Of red Morocco folio, saw displayed,
 In long succession, pre-existing ghosts
 Of Beauties yet unborn—the rustic Lodge
 Antique, and Cottage with verandah graced,
 Nor lacking, for fit company, alcove,
 Green-house, shell-grot, and moss-lined hermitage.
 Thou see'st a homely Pile, yet to these walls
 The heifer comes in the snow-storm, and here
 The new-dropped lamb finds shelter from the wind.
 And hither does one Poet sometimes row
 His pinnacle, a small vagrant barge, up-piled
 With plenteous store of heath and withered fern,
 (A lading which he with his sickle cuts,
 Among the mountains) and beneath this roof
 He makes his summer couch, and here at noon
 Spreads out his limbs, while, yet unshorn, the Sheep,
 Panting beneath the burthen of their wool,
 Lie round him, even as if they were a part
 Of his own Household : nor, while from his bed
 He looks, through the open door-place, toward the lake
 And to the stirring breezes, does he want
 Creations lovely as the work of sleep—
 Fair sights, and visions of romantic joy !
 (1800)

III

WRITTEN WITH A SLATE PENCIL UPON A STONE, THE
 LARGEST OF A HEAP LYING NEAR A DESERTED QUARRY,
 UPON ONE OF THE ISLANDS AT RYDAL

STRANGER ! this hillock of mis-shapen stones
 Is not a Ruin spared or made by time,
 Nor, as perchance thou rashly deem'st, the Cairn
 Of some old British Chief : 'tis nothing more
 Than the rude embryo of a little Dome
 Or Pleasure-house, once destined to be built
 Among the birch-trees of this rocky isle.
 But, as it chanced, Sir William having learned
 That from the shore a full-grown man might wade
 And make himself a freeman of this spot
 At any hour he chose, the prudent Knight

Desisted, and the quarry and the mound
 Are monuments of his unfinished task.
 The block on which these lines are traced, perhaps,
 Was once selected as the corner-stone
 Of that intended Pile, which would have been
 Some quaint odd plaything of elaborate skill,
 So that, I guess, the linnet and the thrush,
 And other little builders who dwell here,
 Had wondered at the work. But blame him not,
 For old Sir William was a gentle Knight,
 Bred in this vale, to which he appertained
 With all his ancestry. Then peace to him,
 And for the outrage which he had devised
 Entire forgiveness!—But if thou art one
 On fire with thy impatience to become
 An inmate of these mountains,—if, disturbed
 By beautiful conceptions, thou hast hewn
 Out of the quiet rock the elements
 Of thy trim Mansion destined soon to blaze
 In snow-white splendour,—think again; and, taught
 By old Sir William and his quarry, leave
 Thy fragments to the bramble and the rose;
 There let the vernal slow-worm sun himself,
 And let the redbreast hop from stone to stone.
 (1800)

THE SPARROW'S NEST ¹

BEHOLD, within the leafy shade,
 Those bright blue eggs together laid!
 On me the chance-discovered sight
 Gleamed like a vision of delight.
 I started—seeming to espy
 The home and sheltered bed,
 The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
 My Father's house, in wet or dry
 My sister Emmeline and I
 Together visited.

She looked at it and seemed to fear it;
 Dreading, tho' wishing, to be near it:
 Such heart was in her, being then
 A little Prattler among men.
 The Blessing of my later years
 Was with me when a boy:

¹ Written in the Orchard, Town-end, Grasmere.

She gave me eyes, she gave me ears ;
And humble cares, and delicate fears ;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears ;
And love, and thought, and joy.

(1801)

PELION AND OSSA

PELION and Ossa flourish side by side,
Together in immortal books enrolled :
His ancient dower Olympus hath not sold ;
And that inspiring Hill, which "did divide
Into two ample horns his forehead wide,"
Shines with poetic radiance as of old ;
While not an English Mountain we behold
By the celestial Muses glorified.
Yet round our sea-girt shore they rise in crowds ;
What was the great Parnassus' self to Thee,
Mount Skiddaw ? In his natural sovereignty
Our British Hill is nobler far ; he shrouds
His double front among Atlantic clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly.

(1801)

THE SAILOR'S MOTHER ¹

ONE morning (raw it was and wet—
A foggy day in winter time)
A Woman on the road I met,
Not old, though something past her prime :
Majestic in her person, tall and straight ;
And like a Roman matron's was her mien and gait.
The ancient spirit is not dead ;
Old times, thought I, are breathing there ;
Proud was I that my country bred
Such strength, a dignity so fair :
She begged an alms, like one in poor estate ;
I looked at her again, nor did my pride abate.
When from these lofty thoughts I woke,
"What is it," said I, "that you bear,
Beneath the covert of your Cloak,
Protected from this cold damp air ?"
She answered, soon as she the question heard,
"A simple burthen, Sir, a little Singing-bird."

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere. I met this woman near the Wishing-gate, on the high-road that then led from Grasmere to Ambleside. Her appearance was exactly as here described, and such was her account, nearly to the letter.

And, thus continuing, she said,
 "I had a Son, who many a day
 Sailed on the seas, but he is dead ;
 In Denmark he was cast away ;
 And I have travelled weary miles to see
 If aught which he had owned might still remain for me.
 "The bird and cage they both were his :
 'Twas my Son's bird ; and neat and trim
 He kept it : many voyages
 The singing-bird had gone with him ;
 When last he sailed, he left the bird behind ;
 From bodings, as might be, that hung upon his mind.
 "He to a fellow-lodger's care
 Had left it, to be watched and fed,
 And pipe its song in safety ;—there
 I found it when my Son was dead ;
 And now, God help me for my little wit !
 I bear it with me, Sir ;—he took so much delight in it."
 (1802)

ALICE FELL

OR, POVERTY

THE post-boy drove with fierce career,
 For threatening clouds the moon had drowned ;
 When, as we hurried on, my ear
 Was smitten with a startling sound.
 As if the wind blew many ways,
 I heard the sound,—and more and more,
 It seemed to follow with the chaise,
 And still I heard it as before.
 At length I to the boy called out ;
 He stopped his horses at the word,
 But neither cry, nor voice, nor shout,
 Nor aught else like it, could be heard.
 The boy then smacked his whip, and fast
 The horses scampered through the rain ;
 But, hearing soon upon the blast
 The cry, I bade him halt again.
 Forthwith alighting on the ground,
 "Whence comes," said I, "this piteous moan ?"
 And there a little Girl I found,
 Sitting behind the chaise, alone.

"My cloak!" no other word she spake,
But loud and bitterly she wept,
As if her innocent heart would break;
And down from off her seat she leapt.

"What ails you, child?"—she sobbed "Look here!"
I saw it in the wheel entangled,
A weather-beaten rag as e'er
From any garden scare-crow dangled.

There, twisted between nave and spoke,
It hung, nor could at once be freed;
But our joint pains unloosed the cloak,
A miserable rag indeed!

"And whither are you going, child,
To-night along these lonesome ways?"
"To Durham," answered she, half wild—
"Then come with me into the chaise."

Insensible to all relief
Sat the poor girl, and forth did send
Sob after sob, as if her grief
Could never, never have an end.

"My child, in Durham do 'you dwell?"
She checked herself in her distress,
And said, "My name is Alice Fell;
I'm fatherless and motherless.

"And I to Durham, Sir, belong."
Again, as if the thought would choke
Her very heart, her grief grew strong;
And all was for her tattered cloak!

The chaise drove on; our journey's end
Was nigh; and, sitting by my side,
As if she had lost her only friend
She wept, nor would be pacified.

Up to the tavern-door we post;
Of Alice and her grief I told;
And I gave money to the host,
To buy a new cloak for the old.

"And let it be of duffil grey,
As warm a cloak as man can sell!"
Proud creature was she the next day,
The little orphan, Alice Fell!

BEGGARS¹

SHE had a tall man's height or more ;
 Her face from summer's noontide heat
 No bonnet shaded, but she wore
 A mantle, to her very feet
 Descending with a graceful flow,
 And on her head a cap as white as new-fallen snow.

Her skin was of Egyptian brown :
 Haughty, as if her eye had seen
 Its own light to a distance thrown,
 She towered, fit person for a Queen
 To lead those ancient Amazonian files ;
 Or ruling Bandit's wife among the Grecian isles.

Advancing, forth she stretched her hand
 And begged an alms with doleful plea
 That ceased not ; on our English land
 Such woes, I knew, could never be ;
 And yet a boon I gave her, for the creature
 Was beautiful to see—a weed of glorious feature.

I left her, and pursued my way ;
 And soon before me did espy
 A pair of little Boys at play,
 Chasing a crimson butterfly ;
 The taller followed with his hat in hand,
 Wreathed round with yellow flowers the gayest of the land

The other wore a rimless crown
 With leaves of laurel stuck about ;
 And, while both followed up and down,
 Each whooping with a merry shout,
 In their fraternal features I could trace
 Unquestionable lines of that wild Suppliant's face.

Yet *they*, so blithe of heart, seemed fit
 For finest tasks of earth or air :
 Wings let them have, and they might flit
 Precursors to Aurora's car,
 Scattering fresh flowers ; though happier far, I ween,
 To hunt their fluttering game o'er rock and level green.

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere. Met, and described to me by my Sister, near the quarry at the head of Rydal lake, a place still a chosen resort of vagrants travelling with their families.

Sequel to the Foregoing 107

They dart across my path—but lo,
Each ready with a plaintive whine !
Said I, “ Not half an hour ago
Your Mother has had alms of mine.”
“ That cannot be,” one answered—“ she is dead : ”—
I looked reproof—they saw—but neither hung his head.
“ She has been dead, Sir, many a day.”—
“ Hush, boys ! you’re telling me a lie ;
It was your Mother, as I say ! ”
And, in the twinkling of an eye,
“ Come ! come ! ” cried one, and without more ado,
Off to some other play the joyous Vagrants flew !
(1802)

SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING

COMPOSED MANY YEARS AFTER

WHERE are they now, those wanton Boys ?
For whose free range the dædal earth
Was filled with animated toys,
And implements of frolic mirth ;
With tools for ready wit to guide ;
And ornaments of seemlier pride,
More fresh, more bright, than Princes wear ;
For what one moment flung aside,
Another could repair ;
What good or evil have they seen
Since I their pastime witnessed here,
Their daring wiles, their sportive cheer ?
I ask—but all is dark between !

Spirits of beauty and of grace !
Associates in that eager chase ;
Ye, by a course to nature true,
The sterner judgment can subdue ;
And waken a relenting smile
When she encounters fraud or guile ;
And sometimes ye can charm away
The inward mischief, or allay,
Ye, who within the blameless mind
Your favourite seat of empire find !

They met me in a genial hour,
When universal nature breathed
As with the breath of one sweet flower,—
A time to overrule the power

To a Butterfly

Of discontent, and check the birth
 Of thoughts with better thoughts at strife,
 The most familiar bane of life
 Since parting Innocence bequeathed
 Mortality to Earth !
 Soft clouds, the whitest of the year,
 Sailed through the sky—the brooks ran clear ;
 The lambs from rock to rock were bounding ;
 With songs the budded groves resounding ;
 And to my heart is still endeared
 The faith with which it then was cheered ;
 The faith which saw that gladsome pair
 Walk through the fire with unsinged hair.

Or, if such thoughts must needs deceive
 Kind Spirits ! may we not believe
 That they, so happy and so fair,
 Through your sweet influence, and the care
 Of pitying Heaven, at least were free
 From touch of *deadly* injury ?
 Destined, whate'er their earthly doom,
 For mercy and immortal bloom !

TO A BUTTERFLY ¹

1

STAY near me—do not take thy flight !
 A little longer stay in sight !
 Much converse do I find in thee,
 Historian of my infancy !
 Float near me ; do not yet depart !
 Dead times revive in thee :
 Thou bring'st, gay creature as thou art !
 A solemn image to my heart,
 My father's family !

Oh ! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
 The time, when, in our childish plays,
 My sister Emmeline and I
 Together chased the butterfly !
 A very hunter did I rush
 Upon the prey :—with leaps and springs
 I followed on from brake to bush ;
 But she, God love her, feared to brush
 The dust from off its wings.

¹ Written in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere.

I've watched you now a full half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower ;
And, little Butterfly ! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless !—not frozen seas
More motionless ! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again !

This plot of orchard-ground is ours ;
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers ;
Here rest your wings when they are weary
Here lodge as in a sanctuary !
Come often to us, fear no wrong ;
Sit near us on the bough !
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young :
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

(1802)

THE EMIGRANT MOTHER

ONCE in a lonely hamlet I sojourned
In which a Lady driven from France did dwell ;
The big and lesser griefs with which she mourned,
In friendship she to me would often tell.
This Lady, dwelling upon British ground,
Where she was childless, daily would repair
To a poor neighbouring cottage ; as I found,
For sake of a young Child whose home was there.

Once having seen her clasp with fond embrace
This Child, I chanted to myself a lay,
Endeavouring in our English tongue, to trace
Such things as she unto the Babe might say :
And thus, from what I heard and knew, or guessed,
My song the workings of her heart expressed.

“Dear Babe, thou daughter of another,
One moment let me be thy mother !
An infant's face and looks are thine,
And sure a mother's heart is mine :

The Emigrant Mother

Thy own dear mother's far away,
At labour in the harvest field :
Thy little sister is at play ;—
What warmth, what comfort would it yield
To my poor heart, if thou wouldst be
One little hour a child to me !

II

“ Across the waters I am come,
And I have left a babe at home :
A long, long way of land and sea !
Come to me—I'm no enemy :
I am the same who at thy side
Sate yesterday, and made a nest
For thee, sweet Baby !—thou hast tried,
Thou know'st the pillow of my breast ;
Good, good art thou :—alas ! to me
Far more than I can be to thee.

III

“ Here, little Darling, dost thou lie ;
An infant thou, a mother I !
Mine wilt thou be, thou hast no fears ;
Mine art thou—spite of these my tears.
Alas ! before I left the spot,
My baby and its dwelling-place ;
The nurse said to me, ‘ Tears should not
Be shed upon an infant's face,
It was unlucky ’—no, no, no ;
No truth is in them who say so !

IV

“ My own dear Little-one will sigh,
Sweet Babe ! and they will let him die.
‘ He pines,’ they'll say, ‘ it is his doom,
And you may see his hour is come.’
Oh ! had he but thy cheerful smiles,
Limbs stout as thine, and lips as gay,
Thy looks, thy cunning, and thy wiles,
And countenance like a summer's day,
They would have hopes of him ;—and then
I should behold his face again !

V

“ 'Tis gone—like dreams that we forget ;
There was a smile or two—yet—yet

The Emigrant Mother

III

I can remember them, I see
The smiles, worth all the world to me.
Dear Baby ! I must lay thee down ;
Thou troublest me with strange alarms ;
Smiles hast thou, bright ones of thy own ;
I cannot keep thee in my arms ;
For they confound me ;—where—where is
That last, that sweetest smile of his ?

VI

“ Oh ! how I love thee !—we will stay
Together here this one half day.
My sister's child, who bears my name,
From France to sheltering England came ;
She with her mother crossed the sea ;
The babe and mother near me dwell :
Yet does my yearning heart to thee
Turn rather, though I love her well :
Rest, little Stranger, rest thee here !
Never was any child more dear !

VII

“—I cannot help it ; ill intent
I've none, my pretty Innocent !
I weep—I know they do thee wrong,
These tears—and my poor idle tongue.
Oh, what a kiss was that ! my cheek
How cold it is ! but thou art good ;
Thine eyes are on me—they would speak,
I think, to help me if they could.
Blessings upon that soft, warm face,
My heart again is in its place !

VIII

“ While thou art mine, my little Love,
This cannot be a sorrowful grove ;
Contentment, hope, and mother's glee,
I seem to find them all in thee :
Here's grass to play with, here are flowers ;
I'll call thee by my darling's name ;
Thou hast, I think, a look of ours,
Thy features seem to me the same ;
His little sister thou shalt be ;
And, when once more my home I see,
I'll tell him many tales of Thee.”

"MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BEHOLD"¹

My heart leaps up when I behold
 A rainbow in the sky :
 So was it when my life began ;
 So is it now I am a man ;
 So be it when I shall grow old,
 Or let me die !
 The Child is father of the Man ;
 And I could wish my days to be
 Bound each to each by natural piety.

(1802)

"AMONG ALL LOVELY THINGS MY LOVE
 HAD BEEN"

AMONG all lovely things my Love had been ;
 Had noted well the stars, all flowers that grew
 About her home ; but she had never seen
 A glow-worm, never one, and this I knew.

While riding near her home one stormy night
 A single glow-worm did I chance to espy ;
 I gave a fervent welcome to the sight,
 And from my horse I leapt ; great joy had I.

Upon a leaf the glow-worm did I lay,
 To bear it with me through the stormy night :
 And, as before, it shone without dismay ;
 Albeit putting forth a fainter light.

When to the dwelling of my Love I came,
 I went into the orchard quietly ;
 And left the glow-worm, blessing it by name,
 Laid safely by itself, beneath a tree.

The whole next day, I hoped, and hoped with fear ;
 At night the glow-worm shone beneath the tree ;
 I led my Lucy to the spot, "Look here,"
 Oh ! joy it was for her, and joy for me !

(1802)

Written at Town-end, Grasmere.

Redbreast Chasing Butterfly 113

WRITTEN IN MARCH

WHILE RESTING ON THE BRIDGE AT THE FOOT OF
BROTHER'S WATER

THE Cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun ;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest ;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising ;
There are forty feeding like one !

Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill ;
The ploughboy is whooping—anon—anon :
There's joy in the mountains ;
There's life in the fountains ;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing ;
The rain is over and gone !

(1802)

THE REDBREAST CHASING THE BUTTERFLY¹

ART thou the bird whom Man loves best,
The pious bird with the scarlet breast,
Our little English Robin ;
The bird that comes about our doors
When Autumn-winds are sobbing ?
Art thou the Peter of Norway Boors ?
Their Thomas in Finland,
And Russia far inland ?
The bird, that by some name or other
All men who know thee call their brother,
The darling of children and men ?
Could Father Adam² open his eyes
And see this sight beneath the skies,

¹ Observed in the then beautiful orchard, Town-end, Grasmere.

² See *Paradise Lost*, Book XI, where Adam points out to Eve the ominous sign of the Eagle chasing "two birds of gayest plume," and the gentle Hart and Hind pursued by their enemy.

He'd wish to close them again.
 —If the Butterfly knew but his friend,
 Hither his flight he would bend;
 And find his way to me,
 Under the branches of the tree:
 In and out, he darts about;
 Can this be the bird, to man so good,
 That, after their bewildering,
 Covered with leaves the little children,
 So painfully in the wood?
 What ailed thee, Robin, that thou could'st pursue
 A beautiful creature,
 That is gentle by nature?
 Beneath the summer sky
 From flower to flower let him fly;
 'Tis all that he wishes to do.
 The cheerer Thou of our indoor sadness,
 He is the friend of our summer gladness:
 What hinders, then, that ye should be
 Playmates in the sunny weather,
 And fly about in the air together!
 His beautiful wings in crimson are drest,
 A crimson as bright as thine own:
 Would'st thou be happy in thy nest,
 O pious Bird! whom man loves best,
 Love him, or leave him alone!

(1802)

FORESIGHT¹

THAT is work of waste and ruin—
 Do as Charles and I are doing!
 Strawberry-blossoms, one and all,
 We must spare them—here are many:
 Look at it—the flower is small,
 Small and low, though fair as any:
 Do not touch it! summers two
 I am older, Anne, than you.

Pull the primrose, sister Anne!
 Pull as many as you can.
 —Here are daisies, take your fill;
 Pansies, and the cuckoo-flower:

¹ Composed in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere.

To the Small Celandine

115

Of the lofty daffodil
Make your bed, or make your bower ;
Fill your lap, and fill your bosom ;
Only spare the strawberry-blossom !

Primroses, the Spring may love them—
Summer knows but little of them ;
Violets, a barren kind,
Withered on the ground must lie ;
Daisies leave no fruit behind
When the pretty flowerets die ;
Pluck them, and another year
As many will be blowing here.

God has given a kindlier power
To the favoured strawberry-flower.
Hither soon as Spring is fled
You and Charles and I will walk ;
Lurking berries, ripe and red,
Then will hang on every stalk,
Each within its leafy bower ;
And for that promise spare the flower !

(1802)

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE¹

PANSIES, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their praises ;
Long as there's a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory ;
Long as there are violets,
They will have a place in story :
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star ;
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout !
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little Flower !—I'll make a stir,
Like a sage astronomer.

¹ Common Pilewort.

² Written at Town-end, Grasmere.

To the Small Celandine

Modest, yet withal an Elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself ;
Since we needs must first have met
I have seen thee, high and low,
Thirty years or more, and yet
'Twas a face I did not know ;
Thou hast now, go where I may
Fifty greetings in a day.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about her nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless Prodigal ;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood !
Travel with the multitude :
Never heed them ; I aver
That they all are wanton wooers ;
But the thrifty cottager,
Who stirs little out of doors,
Joys to spy thee near her home ;
Spring is coming, Thou art come !

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming Spirit !
Careless of thy neighbourhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face
On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane ;—there's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

Ill befall the yellow flowers,
Children of the flaring hours !
Buttercups, that will be seen,
Whether we will see or no ;
Others, too, of lofty mien ;
They have done as worldlings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine !

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Ill-requited upon earth ;
Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,
Serving at my heart's command,
Tasks that are no tasks renewing,
I will sing, as doth behave,
Hymns in praise of what I love !

(1802)

PLEASURES newly found are sweet
When they lie about our feet :
February last, my heart
First at sight of thee was glad ;
All unheard of as thou art,
Thou must needs, I think, have had,
Celandine ! and long ago,
Praise of which I nothing know.

I have not a doubt but he,
Whosoe'er the man might be
Who the first with pointed rays
(Workman worthy to be sainted)
Set the sign-board in a blaze,
When the rising sun he painted,
Took the fancy from a glance
At thy glittering countenance.

Soon as gentle breezes bring
News of winter's vanishing,
And the children build their bowers,
Sticking 'kerchief-plots of mould
All about with full-blown flowers,
Thick as sheep in shepherd's fold !
With the proudest thou art there,
Mantling in the tiny square.

Often have I sighed to measure
By myself a lonely pleasure,
Sighed to think, I read a book
Only read, perhaps, by me ;
Yet I long could overlook
Thy bright coronet and Thee,
And thy arch and wily ways,
And thy store of other praise

To the Small Celandine

Blithe of heart, from week to week
 Thou dost play at hide-and-seek ;
 While the patient primrose sits
 Like a beggar in the cold,
 Thou, a flower of wiser wits,
 Slipp'st into thy sheltering hold ;
 Liveliest of the vernal train
 When ye all are out again.

Drawn by what peculiar spell,
 By what charm of sight or smell,
 Does the dim-eyed curious Bec,
 Labouring for her waxen cells,
 Fondly settle upon Thee
 Prized above all buds and bells
 Opening daily at thy side,
 By the season multiplied ?

Thou art not beyond the moon,
 But a thing "beneath our shoon :"
 Let the bold Discoverer thrid
 In his bark the polar sea ;
 Rear who will a pyramid ;
 Praise it is enough for me,
 If there be but three or four
 Who will love my little Flower.

(1802)

III

THERE is a Flower, the lesser Celandine,
 That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain ;
 And, the first moment that the sun may shine,
 Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again !

When hailstones have been falling, swarm on swarm,
 Or blasts the green field and the trees distrest,
 Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm,
 In close self-shelter, like a Thing at rest.

But lately, one rough day, this Flower I passed
 And recognised it, though an altered form,
 Now standing forth an offering to the blast,
 And buffeted at will by rain and storm.

I stopped, and said with inly-muttered voice,
 "It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold :
 This neither is its courage nor its choice,
 But its necessity in being old.

Resolution and Independence 119

"The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the dew ;
It cannot help itself in its decay ;
Stiff in its members, withered, changed of hue."
And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was grey.
To be a Prodigal's Favourite—then, worse truth,
A Miser's Pensioner—behold our lot !
O Man, that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things Youth needed not !
(1804)

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE ¹

I

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night ;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods ;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright ;
The birds are singing in the distant woods ;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods ;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters ;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

All things that love the sun are out of doors ;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth ;
The grass is bright with rain-drops ;—on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth ;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

III

I was a Traveller then upon the moor,
I saw the hare that raced about with joy ;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar ;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy :
The pleasant season did my heart employ :
My old remembrances went from me wholly ;
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere. This old Man I met a few hundred yards from my cottage ; and the account of him is taken from his own mouth. I was in the state of feeling described in the beginning of the poem, while crossing over Barton Fell from Mr. Clarkson's, at the foot of Ullswater, towards Askham. The image of the hare I then observed on the ridge of the Fell.

120 Resolution and Independence

IV

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low ;
To me that morning did it happen so ;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came ;
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor
name.

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky ;
And I bethought me of the playful hare :
Even such a happy Child of earth am I ;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare ;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care ;
But there may come another day to me—
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

VI

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood ;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good ;
But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all ?

VII

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride ;
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side :
By our own spirits are we deified :
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness ;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.

VIII

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell, that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man before me unawares :
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.

Resolution and Independence 121

IX

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence ;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and whence ;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense :
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposes, there to sun itself ;

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,
Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age :
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage ;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

XI

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face,
Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood :
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

XII

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
As if he had been reading in a book :
And now a stranger's privilege I took ;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
"This morning gives us promise of a glorious day."

XIII

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew :
And him with further words I thus bespake,
"What occupation do you there pursue ?
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes.

122 Resolution and Independence

XIV

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest—
Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach
Of ordinary men ; a stately speech ;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

XV

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor :
Employment hazardous and wearisome !
And he had many hardships to endure :
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor ;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance,
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

XVI

The old Man still stood talking by my side ;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard ; nor word from word could I divide ;
And the whole body of the Man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream ;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

XVII

My former thoughts returned : the fear that kills ;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed ;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills ;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
“How is it that you live, and what is it you do?”

XVIII

He with a smile did then his words repeat ;
And said, that, gathering leeches, far and wide
He travelled ; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
“Once I could meet with them on every side ;
But they have dwindled long by slow decay ;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may.”

I Grieved for Buonaparté 123

XIX

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old Man's shape, and speech—all troubled me :
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

XX

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind,
But stately in the main ; and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure ;
I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor !"
(1802)

"I GRIEVED FOR BUONAPARTÉ"

I GRIEVED for Buonaparté, with a vain
And an unthinking grief ! The tenderest mood
Of that Man's mind—what can it be ? what food
Fed his first hopes ? what knowledge could *he* gain ?
'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
The Governor who must be wise and good,
And temper with the sternness of the brain
Thoughts motherly, and meek as womanhood.
Wisdom doth live with children round her knees :
Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
Of the mind's business : these are the degrees
By which true Sway doth mount ; this is the stalk
True Power doth grow on ; and her rights are these.
(1802)

A FAREWELL ¹

FAREWELL, thou little Nook of mountain-ground,
Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
Of that magnificent temple which doth bound
One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare ;

Composed just before my Sister and I went to fetch Mrs. Wordsworth from Gallow-hill, near Scarborough.

Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found,
Farewell !—we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful care,
Thee, and the Cottage which thou dost surround.

Our boat is safely anchored by the shore,
And there will safely ride when we are gone ;
The flowering shrubs that deck our humble door
Will prosper, though untended and alone :
Fields, goods, and far-off chattels we have none :
These narrow bounds contain our private store
Of things earth makes, and sun doth shine upon ;
Here are they in our sight—we have no more.

Sunshine and shower be with you, bud and bell !
For two months now in vain we shall be sought :
We leave you here in solitude to dwell
With these our latest gifts of tender thought ;
Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat,
Bright gowan, and marsh-marigold, farewell !
Whom from the borders of the Lake we brought,
And placed together near our rocky Well.

We go for One to whom ye will be dear ;
And she will prize this Bower, this Indian shed,
Our own contrivance, Building without peer !
—A gentle Maid, whose heart is lowly bred,
Whose pleasures are in wild fields gathered,
With joyousness, and with a thoughtful cheer,
Will come to you ; to you herself will wed ;
And love the blessed life that we lead here.

Dear Spot ! which we have watched with tender heed,
Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown
Among the distant mountains, flower and weed,
Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,
Making all kindness registered and known ;
Thou for our sakes, though Nature's child indeed,
Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need.

And O most constant, yet most fickle Place,
Thou hast thy wayward moods, as thou dost show
To them who look not daily on thy face ;
Who, being loved, in love no bounds dost know,

‘The Sun has long been Set’ 125

And say’st, when we forsake thee, “Let them go!”
Thou easy-hearted Thing, with thy wild race
Of weeds and flowers, till we return be slow,
And travel with the year at a soft pace.

Help us to tell Her tales of years gone by,
And this sweet spring, the best beloved and best;
Joy will be flown in its mortality;
Something must stay to tell us of the rest.
Here, thronged with primroses, the steep rock’s breast
Glittered at evening like a starry sky;
And in this bush our sparrow built her nest,
Of which I sang one song that will not die.

O happy Garden! whose seclusion deep
Hath been so friendly to industrious hours;
And to soft slumbers, that did gently steep
Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers,
And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers;
Two burning months let summer overleap,
And, coming back with Her who will be ours,
Into thy bosom we again shall creep.

(1802)

“THE SUN HAS LONG BEEN SET”

THE sun has long been set,
The stars are out by twos and threes,
The little birds are piping yet
Among the bushes and the trees;
There’s a cuckoo, and one or two thrushes,
And a far-off wind that rushes,
And a sound of water that gushes,
And the cuckoo’s sovereign cry
Fills all the hollow of the sky.
Who would “go parading”
In London, “and masquerading,”
On such a night of June
With that beautiful soft half-moon,
And all these innocent blisses?
On such a night as this is!

(1802)
F 203

126 By the Sea-side, near Calais

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE,

SEPT. 3, 1802¹

EARTH has not anything to show more fair :
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky ;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill ;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !
The river glideth at his own sweet will :
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
And all that mighty heart is lying still !

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS,

AUGUST 1802

FAIR Star of evening, Splendour of the west,
Star of my Country !—on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom ; yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Should'st be my Country's emblem ; and should'st wink,
Bright Star ! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There ! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, that is England ; there she lies.
Blessings be on you both ! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory !—I, with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here.

CALAIS, AUGUST 1802

Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind,
Or what is it that ye go forth to see ?
Lords, lawyers, statesmen, squires of low degree,
Men known, and men unknown, sick, lame, and blind,
Post forward all, like creatures of one kind,
With first-fruit offerings crowd to bend the knee
In France, before the new-born Majesty.

¹ Written on the roof of a coach, on my way to France.

'Tis ever thus. Ye men of prostrate mind,
 A seemly reverence may be paid to power ;
 But that's a loyal virtue, never sown
 In haste, nor springing with a transient shower.
 When truth, when sense, when liberty were flown.
 What hardship had it been to wait an hour?
 Shame on you, feeble Heads, to slavery prone !

COMPOSED NEAR CALAIS, ON THE ROAD
 LEADING TO ARDRES, AUGUST 7, 1802

JONES ! as from Calais southward you and I
 Went pacing side by side, this public Way
 Streamed with the pomp of a too-credulous day,¹
 When faith was pledged to new-born Liberty :
 A homeless sound of joy was in the sky :
 From hour to hour the antiquated Earth
 Beat like the heart of Man : songs, garlands, mirth,
 Banners, and happy faces, far and nigh !
 And now, sole register that these things were,
 Two solitary greetings have I heard,
 "*Good-morrow, Citizen !*" a hollow word,
 As if a dead man spake it ! Yet despair
 Touches me not, though pensive as a bird
 Whose vernal coverts winter hath laid bare.

CALAIS, AUGUST 15, 1802

FESTIVALS have I seen that were not names :
 This is young Buonaparté's natal day,
 And his is henceforth an established sway—
 Consul for life. With worship France proclaims
 Her approbation, and with pomps and games.
 Heaven grant that other Cities may be gay !
 Calais is not : and I have bent my way
 To the sea-coast, noting that each man frames
 His business as he likes. Far other show
 My youth here witnessed, in a prouder time ;
 The senselessness of joy was then sublime !
 Happy is he, who, caring not for Pope,
 Consul, or King, can sound himself to know
 The destiny of Man, and live in hope.

¹ 14th July, 1790.

128 Extinction of Venetian Republic

"IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING"¹

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration ; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity ;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea :
Listen ! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child ! dear Girl ! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine :
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year ;
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

ONCE did She hold the gorgeous east in fee ;
And was the safeguard of the west : the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free ;
No guile seduced, no force could violate ;
And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay ;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day :
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great, is passed away.
(1802)

THE KING OF SWEDEN

THE Voice of song from distant lands shall call
To that great King ; shall hail the crownèd Youth
Who, taking counsel of unbending Truth,
By one example hath set forth to all
How they with dignity may stand ; or fall,

¹ This was composed on the beach near Calais, in the autumn of
1802.

To Toussaint L'Ouverture 129

If fall they must. Now, whither doth it tend?
And what to him and his shall be the end?
That thought is one which neither can appal
Nor cheer him; for the illustrious Swede hath done
The thing which ought to be; is raised *above*
All consequences: work he hath begun
Of fortitude, and piety, and love,
Which all his glorious ancestors approve:
The heroes bless him, him their rightful son.
(1802)

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;—
O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.
(1802)

COMPOSED IN THE VALLEY NEAR DOVER, ON THE DAY OF LANDING

HERE, on our native soil, we breathe once more.
The cock that crows, the smoke that curls, that sound
Of bells; those boys who in yon meadow-ground
In white-sleeved shirts are playing; and the roar
Of the waves breaking on the chalky shore;—
All, all are English. Oft have I looked round
With joy in Kent's green vales; but never found
Myself so satisfied in heart before.
Europe is yet in bonds; but let that pass,
Thought for another moment. 'Thou art free,
My Country! and 'tis joy enough and pride
For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the grass
Of England once again, and hear and see,
With such a dear Companion at my side.
(1802)

SEPTEMBER 1, 1802¹

WE had a female Passenger who came
 From Calais with us, spotless in array,—
 A white-robed Negro, like a lady gay,
 Yet downcast as a woman fearing blame ;
 Meek, destitute, as seemed, of hope or aim
 She sate, from notice turning not away,
 But on all proffered intercourse did lay
 A weight of languid speech, or to the same
 No sign of answer made by word or face :
 Yet still her eyes retained their tropic fire,
 That, burning independent of the mind,
 Joined with the lustre of her rich attire
 To mock the Outcast.—O ye Heavens, be kind !
 And feel, thou Earth, for this afflicted Race !

NEAR DOVER, SEPTEMBER 1802

INLAND, within a hollow vale, I stood ;
 And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
 The coast of France—the coast of France how near !
 Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.
 I shrunk ; for verily the barrier flood
 Was like a lake, or river bright and fair,
 A span of waters ; yet what power is there !
 What mightiness for evil and for good !
 Even so doth God protect us if we be
 Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and waters roll,
 Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity ;
 Yet in themselves are nothing ! One decree
 Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the soul
 Only, the Nations shall be great and free.

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER 1802²

O FRIEND ! I know not which way I must look
 For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,

¹ Among the capricious acts of tyranny that disgraced those times, was the chasing of all Negroes from France by decree of the government : we had " " who was one of the expelled.

² This was " " after my return from France to London, when I could not but be struck, as here described, with the vanity and parade of our own country, especially in great towns and cities, as contrasted with the quiet, and I may say the desolation, that the revolution had produced in France.

To think that now our life is only drest
 For show ; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
 Or groom !—We must run glittering like a brook
 In the open sunshine, or we are unblest :
 The wealthiest man among us is the best :
 No grandeur now in nature or in book
 Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
 This is idolatry ; and these we adore :
 Plain living and high thinking are no more :
 The homely beauty of the good old cause
 Is gone ; our peace, our fearful innocence,
 And pure religion breathing household laws.

LONDON, 1802

MILTON ! thou should'st be living at this hour :
 England hath need of thee : she is a fen
 Of stagnant waters : altar, sword, and pen,
 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
 Have forfeited their ancient English dower
 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men ;
 Oh ! raise us up, return to us again ;
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
 Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart :
 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea :
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
 So didst thou travel on life's common way,
 In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart
 The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

“ GREAT MEN HAVE BEEN AMONG US ”

GREAT men have been among us ; hands that penned
 And tongues that uttered wisdom—better none :
 The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,
 Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend.
 These moralists could act and comprehend :
 They knew how genuine glory was put on ;
 Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
 In splendour : what strength was, that would not bend
 But in magnanimous meekness. France, 'tis strange,
 Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.
 Perpetual emptiness ! unceasing change !
 No single volume paramount, no code,
 No master spirit, no determined road ;
 But equally a want of books and men !

132 'When I have Borne in Memory'

"IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF"

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish ; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old :
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake ; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.
(1802)

"WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY"

WHEN I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my Country !—am I to be blamed ?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee ; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men :
And I by my affection was beguiled :
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child !
(1802)

COMPOSED AFTER A JOURNEY ACROSS THE HAMBLETON HILLS, YORKSHIRE ¹

DARK and more dark the shades of evening fell ;
The wished-for point was reached—but at an hour
When little could be gained from that rich dower
Of prospect, whereof many thousands tell.

¹ Composed October 4th, 1802, after a journey over the Hambleton Hills, on a day memorable to me—the day of my marriage. The horizon commanded by those hills is most magnificent.

Yet did the glowing west with marvellous power
 Salute us ; there stood Indian citadel,
 Temple of Greece, and minster with its tower
 Substantially expressed—a place for bell
 Or clock to toll from ! Many a tempting isle,
 With groves that never were imagined, lay
 'Mid seas how steadfast ! objects all for the eye
 Of silent rapture ; but we felt the while
 We should forget them ; they are of the sky,
 And from our earthly memory fade away.

(1802)

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN MY POCKET-COPY OF THOMSON'S
 'CASTLE OF INDOLENCE' ¹

WITHIN our happy Castle there dwelt One
 Whom without blame I may not overlook ;
 For never sun on living creature shone
 Who more devout enjoyment with us took :
 Here on his hours he hung as on a book,
 On his own time here would he float away,
 As doth a fly upon a summer brook ;
 But go to-morrow, or belike to-day,
 Seek for him,—he is fled ; and whither none can say.

Thus often would he leave our peaceful home,
 And find elsewhere his business or delight ;
 Out of our Valley's limits did he roam :
 Full many a time, upon a stormy night,
 His voice came to us from the neighbouring height :
 Oft could we see him driving full in view
 At mid-day when the sun was shining bright ;
 What ill was on him, what he had to do,
 A mighty wonder bred among our quiet crew.

Ah ! piteous sight it was to see this Man
 When he came back to us, a withered flower,—
 Or like a sinful creature, pale and wan.
 Down would he sit ; and without strength or power
 Look at the common grass from hour to hour :

¹ Composed in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere, Coleridge living with us much at the time : his son Hartley has said, that his father's character and habits are here preserved in a livelier way than in anything that has been written about him.

And oftentimes, how long I fear to say,
 Where apple-trees in blossom made a bower,
 Retired in that sunshiny shade he lay ;
 And, like a naked Indian, slept himself away.
 Great wonder to our gentle tribe it was
 Whenever from our Valley he withdrew ;
 For happier soul no living creature has
 Than he had, being here the long day through.
 Some thought he was a lover, and did woo :
 Some thought far worse of him, and judged him wrong;
 But verse was what he had been wedded to ;
 And his own mind did like a tempest strong
 Come to him thus, and drove the weary Wight along.
 With him there often walked in friendly guise,
 Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree,
 A noticeable Man with large grey eyes,
 And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly
 As if a blooming face it ought to be ;
 Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear,
 Deprest by weight of musing Phantasy ;
 Profound his forehead was, though not severe ;
 Yet some did think that he had little business here :
 Sweet heaven forfend ! his was a lawful right ;
 Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy ;
 His limbs would toss about him with delight
 Like branches when strong winds the trees annoy.
 Nor lacked his calmer hours device or toy
 To banish listlessness and irksome care ;
 He would have taught you how you might employ
 Yourself ; and many did to him repair,—
 And certes not in vain ; he had inventions rare.
 Expedients, too, of simplest sort he tried :
 Long blades of grass, plucked round him as he lay,
 Made, to his ear attentively applied,
 A pipe on which the wind would deftly play ;
 Glasses he had, that little things display,
 The beetle panoplied in gems and gold,
 A mailed angel on a battle-day ;
 The mysteries that cups of flowers enfold,
 And all the gorgeous sights which fairies do behold.
 He would entice that other Man to hear
 His music, and to view his imagery :
 And, sooth, these two were each to the other dear :

No livelier love in such a place could be :
 There did they dwell—from earthly labour free,
 As happy spirits as were ever seen ;
 If but a bird, to keep them company,
 Or butterfly sate down, they were, I ween,
 As pleased as if the same had been a Maiden-queen.
 (1802)

TO H. C.

SIX YEARS OLD

O THOU ! whose fancies from afar are brought ;
 Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
 And fittest to unutterable thought
 The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol :
 Thou faery voyager ! that dost float
 In such clear water, that thy boat
 May rather seem
 To brood on air than on an earthly stream ;
 Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
 Where earth and heaven do make one imagery ;
 O blessed vision ! happy child !
 Thou art so exquisitely wild,
 I think of thee with many fears
 For what may be thy lot in future years.
 I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
 Lord of thy house and hospitality ;
 And Grief, uneasy lover ! never rest
 But when she sate within the touch of thee.
 O too industrious folly !
 O vain and causeless melancholy !
 Nature will either end thee quite ;
 Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
 Preserve for thee, by individual right,
 A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.
 What hast thou to do with sorrow,
 Or the injuries of to-morrow ?
 Thou art a dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
 Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks,
 Or to be trailed along the soiling earth ;
 A gem that glitters while it lives,
 And no forewarning gives ;
 But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
 Slips in a moment out of life.
 (1802)

To the Daisy

TO THE DAISY¹

I

IN youth from rock to rock I went,
 From hill to hill in discontent
 Of pleasure high and turbulent,
 Most pleased when most uneasy ;
 But now my own delights I make,—
 My thirst at every rill can slake,
 And gladly Nature's love partake,
 Of Thee, sweet Daisy !

Thee Winter in the garland wears
 That thinly decks his few grey hairs ;
 Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
 That she may sun thee ;
 Whole Summer-fields are thine by right ;
 And Autumn, melancholy Wight !
 Doth in thy crimson head delight
 When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
 Thou greet'st the traveller in the lane ;
 Pleased at his greeting thee again ;
 Yet nothing daunted,
 Nor grieved if thou be set at nought :
 And oft alone in nooks remote
 We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
 When such are wanted.

Be violets in their secret mews
 The flowers the wanton Zephyrs choose ;
 Proud be the rose, with rains and dews
 Her head impearling,

¹ This and the two following were composed in the orchard, Town end, Grasmere, where the bird was often seen as here described.

“ Her divine skill taught me this,
 That from every thing I saw
 I could some instruction draw,
 And raise pleasure to the height
 Through the meanest object's sight.
 By the murmur of a spring,
 Or the least bough's rustelling ;
 By a Daisy whose leaves spread
 Shut when Titan goes to bed ;
 Or a shady bush or tree ;
 She could more infuse in me
 Than all Nature's beauties can
 In some other wiser man.”

To the Daisy

137

Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,
Yet hast not gone without thy fame ;
Thou art indeed by many a claim
The Poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie
Near the green holly,
And wearily at length should fare ;
He needs but look about, and there
Thou art !—a friend at hand, to scare
His melancholy.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain couched an hour,
Have I derived from thy sweet power
Some apprehension ;
Some steady love ; some brief delight ;
Some memory that had taken flight ;
Some chime of fancy wrong or right ;
Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to Thee should turn,
I drink out of an humbler urn
A lowlier pleasure ;
The homely sympathy that heeds
The common life, our nature breeds ;
A wisdom fitted to the needs
Of hearts at leisure.

Fresh-smitten by the morning ray,
When thou art up, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful Flower ! my spirits play
With kindred gladness :
And when, at dusk, by dews opprest
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness.

And all day long I number yet,
All seasons through, another debt,
Which I, wherever thou art met,
To thee am owing ;

To the Daisy

An instinct call it, a blind sense ;
 A happy, genial influence,
 Coming one knows not how, nor whence,
 Nor whither going.

Child of the Year ! that round dost run
 Thy pleasant course,—when day's begun
 As ready to salute the sun
 As lark or leveret,
 Thy long-lost praise thou shalt regain ;
 Nor be less dear to future men
 Than in old time ;—thou not in vain
 Art Nature's favourite.¹

(1802)

With little here to do or see
 Of things that in the great world be,
 Daisy ! again I talk to thee,
 For thou art worthy,
 Thou unassuming Common-place
 Of Nature, with that homely face,
 And yet with something of a grace,
 Which Love makes for thee !

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
 I sit, and play with similes,
 Loose types of things through all degrees,
 Thoughts of thy raising :
 And many a fond and idle name
 I give to thee, for praise or blame,
 As is the humour of the game,
 While I am gazing.

A nun demure of lowly port ;
 Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
 In thy simplicity the sport
 Of all temptations ;
 A queen in crown of rubies drest ;
 A starveling in a scanty vest ;
 Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
 Thy appellations.

¹ See, in Chaucer and the elder Poets, the honours formerly paid to this flower.

A little cyclops, with one eye
 Staring to threaten and defy,
 That thought comes next—and instantly
 The freak is over,
 The shape will vanish—and behold
 A silver shield with boss of gold,
 That spreads itself, some faery bold
 In fight to cover !

I see thee glittering from afar—
 And then thou art a pretty star ;
 Not quite so fair as many are
 In heaven above thee !
 Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
 Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest ;—
 May peace come never to his nest,
 Who shall reprove thee !

Bright *Flower* ! for by that name at last,
 When all my reveries are past,
 I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
 Sweet silent creature !
 That breath'st with me in sun and air,
 Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
 My heart with gladness, and a share
 Of thy meek nature !

(1802)

III 1

BRIGHT Flower ! whose home is everywhere,
 Bold in maternal Nature's care,
 And all the long year through the heir
 Of joy or sorrow ;
 Methinks that there abides in thee
 Some concord with humanity,
 Given to no other flower I see
 The forest thorough !
 Is it that Man is soon deprest ?
 A thoughtless Thing ! who, once unblest,
 Does little on his memory rest,
 Or on his reason,
 And Thou would'st teach him how to find
 A shelter under every wind,
 A hope for times that are unkind
 And every season ?

¹ This and the other Poems addressed to the same flower were composed at Town-end, Grasmere, during the earlier part of my residence there

The Green Linnet

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
 Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,
 With friends to greet thee, or without,
 Yet pleased and willing ;
 Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
 And all things suffering from all
 Thy function apostolical
 In peace fulfilling.

(1802)

THE GREEN LINNET

BENEATH these fruit-tree boughs that shed
 Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
 With brightest sunshine round me spread
 Of spring's unclouded weather,
 In this sequestered nook how sweet
 To sit upon my orchard-seat !
 And birds and flowers once more to greet,
 My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
 In all this covert of the blest :
 Hail to Thee, far above the rest
 In joy of voice and pinion !
 Thou, Linnet ! in thy green array,
 Presiding Spirit here to-day,
 Dost lead the revels of the May ;
 And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
 Make all one band of paramours,
 Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
 Art sole in thy employment :
 A Life, a Presence like the Air,
 Scattering thy gladness without care,
 Too blest with any one to pair ;
 Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees,
 That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
 Behold him perched in ecstasies,
 Yet seeming still to hover ;
 There ! where the flutter of his wings
 Upon his back and body flings
 Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
 That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A Brother of the dancing leaves ;
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes ;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes

(1803)

YEW-TREES ¹

THERE is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore ;
Not loth to furnish weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland's heaths : or those that crossed the sea
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poitiers.
Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary Tree ! a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay ;
Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove ;
Huge trunks ! and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwined fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved ;
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane ;—a pillared shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
With unrejoicing berries—ghostly Shapes
May meet at noontide ; Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight ; Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow ;—there to celebrate
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship ; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

(1803)

¹ Written at Grasmere.

"WHO FANCED WHAT A PRETTY SIGHT"

WHO fancied what a pretty sight
 This Rock would be if edged around
 With living snow-drops? circlet bright!
 How glorious to this orchard-ground!
 Who loved the little Rock, and set
 Upon its head this coronet?
 Was it the humour of a child?
 Or rather of some gentle maid,
 Whose brows, the day that she was styled
 The shepherd-queen, were thus arrayed?
 Of man mature, or matron sage?
 Or old man toying with his age!
 I asked—'twas whispered; The device
 To each and all might well belong:
 It is the Spirit of Paradise
 That prompts such work, a Spirit strong,
 That gives to all the self-same bent
 Where life is wise and innocent.

(1803)

 "IT IS NO SPIRIT WHO FROM HEAVEN
 HATH FLOWN"¹

IT is no Spirit who from heaven hath flown,
 And is descending on his embassy;
 Nor Traveller gone from earth the heavens to espy!
 'Tis Hesperus—there he stands with glittering crown,
 First admonition that the sun is down!
 For yet it is broad day-light: clouds pass by;
 A few are near him still—and now the sky,
 He hath it to himself—'tis all his own.
 O most ambitious Star! an inquest wrought
 Within me when I recognised thy light;
 A moment I was startled at the sight:
 And, while I gazed, there came to me a thought
 That I might step beyond my natural race
 As thou seem'st now to do; might one day trace
 Some ground not mine; and, strong her strength above,
 My Soul, an Apparition in the place,
 Tread there with steps that no one shall reprove!

(1803)

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere. I remember the instant my sister, S. H., called me to the window of our Cottage, saying, "Look how beautiful is yon star! It has the sky all to itself." I composed the verses immediately.

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MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND¹ 1803

DEPARTURE FROM THE VALE OF GRASMERE AUGUST 1803

THE gentlest Shade that walked Elysian plains
Might sometimes covet dissoluble chains ;
Even for the tenants of the zone that lies
Beyond the stars, celestial Paradise,
Methinks 'twould heighten joy, to overleap
At will the crystal battlements, and peep
Into some other region, though less fair,
To see how things are made and managed there.
Change for the worse might please, incursion bold
Into the tracts of darkness and of cold ;
O'er Limbo lake with æry flight to steer,
And on the verge of Chaos hang in fear.
Such animation often do I find,
Power in my breast, wings growing in my mind,
Then, when some rock or hill is overpast,
Perchance without one look behind me cast.
Some barrier with which Nature, from the birth
Of things, has fenced this fairest spot on earth.
O pleasant transit, Grasmere ! to resign
Such happy fields, abodes so calm as thine ;
Not like an outcast with himself at strife ;
The slave of business, time, or care for life,
But moved by choice ; or, if constrained in part,
Yet still with Nature's freedom at the heart ;—
To cull contentment upon wildest shores,
And luxuries extract from bleakest moors ;
With prompt embrace all beauty to enfold,
And having rights in all that we behold.
—Then why these lingering steps?—A bright adieu,
For a brief absence, proves that love is true ;
Ne'er can the way be irksome or forlorn
That winds into itself for sweet return.

¹ Mr. Coleridge, my Sister, and myself started together from Town-end to make a tour in Scotland. Poor Coleridge was at that time in bad spirits, and somewhat too much in love with his own dejection ; and he departed from us, as is recorded in my Sister's Journal, soon after we left Loch Lomond. The verses that stand foremost among these Memorials were not actually written for the occasion, but transplanted from my "Epistle to Sir George Beaumont."

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II AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS

1803

SEVEN YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH ¹

I SHIVER, Spirit fierce and bold,
At thought of what I now behold :
As vapours breathed from dungeons cold,
Strike pleasure dead,
So sadness comes from out the mould
Where Burns is laid.

And have I then thy bones so near,
And thou forbidden to appear ?
As if it were thyself that's here
I shrink with pain ;
And both my wishes and my fear
Alike are vain.

Off weight—nor press on weight !—away
Dark thoughts !—they came, but not to stay ;
With chastened feelings would I pay
The tribute due
To him, and aught that hides his clay
From mortal view.

Fresh as the flower, whose modest worth
He sang, his genius “glinted” forth,
Rose like a star that touching earth,
For so it seems,
Doth glorify its humble birth
With matchless beams.

The piercing eye, the thoughtful brow,
The struggling heart, where be they now ?
Full soon the Aspirant of the plough,
The prompt, the brave,
Slept, with the obscurest, in the low
And silent grave.

I mourned with thousands, but as one
More deeply grieved, for He was gone
Whose light I hailed when first it shone,
And showed my youth
How Verse may build a princely throne
On humble truth.

¹ For illustration, see my Sister's Journal. It may be proper to add that the second of these pieces, though *felt* at the time, was not composed till many years after.

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Alas ! where'er the current tends,
Regret pursues and with it blends,—
Huge Criffel's hoary top ascends
 By Skiddaw seen,—
Neighbours we were, and loving friends
 We might have been ;

True friends though diversely inclined ;
But heart with heart and mind with mind,
Where the main fibres are entwined,
 Through Nature's skill,
May even by contraries be joined
 More closely still.

The tear will start, and let it flow ;
Thou " poor Inhabitant below,"
At this dread moment—even so—
 Might we together
Have sate and talked where gowans blow,
 Or on wild heather.

What treasures would have then been placed
Within my reach ; of knowledge graced
By fancy what a rich repast !
 But why go on ?—
Oh ! spare to sweep, thou mournful blast,
 His grave grass-grown.

There, too, a Son, his joy and pride,
(Not three weeks past the Stripling died,)
Lies gathered to his Father's side,
 Soul-moving sight !
Yet one to which is not denied
 Some sad delight :

For *he* is safe, a quiet bed
Hath early found among the dead,
Harboured where none can be misled,
 Wronged, or distrest ;
And surely here it may be said
 That such are blest.

And oh for Thee, by pitying grace
Checked oft-times in a devious race,
May He who halloweth the place
 Where Man is laid
Receive thy Spirit in the embrace
 For which it prayed !

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Sighing I turned away ; but ere
Night fell I heard, or seemed to hear,
Music that sorrow comes not near,
 A ritual hymn,
Chaunted in love that casts out fear
 By Seraphim.

III

THOUGHTS

SUGGESTED THE DAY FOLLOWING, ON THE BANKS OF
NITH, NEAR THE POET'S RESIDENCE

Too frail to keep the lofty vow
That must have followed when his brow
Was wreathed—"The Vision" tells us how—
 With holly spray,
He faltered, drifted to and fro,
 And passed away.

Well might such thoughts, dear Sister, throng
Our minds when, lingering all too long,
Over the grave of Burns we hung
 In social grief—
Indulged as if it were a wrong
 To seek relief.

But, leaving each unquiet theme
Where gentlest judgments may misdeem,
And prompt to welcome every gleam
 Of good and fair,
Let us beside this limpid Stream
 Breathe hopeful air.

Enough of sorrow, wreck, and blight ;
Think rather of those moments bright
When to the consciousness of right
 His course was true,
When Wisdom prospered in his sight
 And virtue grew.

Yes, freely let our hearts expand,
Freely as in youth's season bland,
When side by side, his Book in hand,
 We wont to stray,
Our pleasure varying at command
 Of each sweet Lay.

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How oft inspired must he have trod
These pathways, yon far-stretching road !
There lurks his home ; in that Abode,
 With mirth elate,
Or in his nobly-pensive mood, .
 The Rustic sate.

Proud thoughts that Image overawes,
Before it humbly let us pause,
And ask of Nature, from what cause
 And by what rules
She trained her Burns to win applause
 That shames the Schools.

Through busiest street and loneliest glen
Are felt the flashes of his pen ;
He rules 'mid winter snows, and when
 Bees fill their hives ;
Deep in the general heart of men
 His power survives.

What need of fields in some far clime
Where Heroes, Sages, Bards sublime,
And all that fetched the flowing rhyme
 From genuine springs,
Shall dwell together till old Time
 Folds up his wings ?

Sweet Mercy ! to the gates of Heaven
This Minstrel lead, his sins forgiven ;
The rueful conflict, the heart riven
 With vain endeavour,
And memory of Earth's bitter leaven,
 Effaced for ever.

But why to Him confine the prayer,
When kindred thoughts and yearnings bear
On the frail heart the purest share
 With all that live ?—
The best of what we do and are,
 Just God, forgive !

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IV

TO THE SONS OF BURNS

AFTER VISITING THE GRAVE OF THEIR FATHER¹

'MID crowded obelisks and urns
I sought the untimely grave of Burns ;
Sons of the Bard, my heart still mourns
With sorrow true ;
And more would grieve, but that it turns
Trembling to you !

Through twilight shades of good and ill
Ye now are panting up life's hill,
And more than common strength and skill
Must ye display ;
If ye would give the better will
Its lawful sway.

Hath Nature strung your nerves to bear
Intemperance with less harm, beware !
But if the Poet's wit ye share,
Like him can speed
The social hour—of tenfold care
There will be need ;

For honest men delight will take
To spare your failings for his sake,
Will flatter you,—and fool and rake
Your steps pursue ;
And of your Father's name will make
A snare for you.

Far from their noisy haunts retire,
And add your voices to the quire
That sanctify the cottage fire
With service meet ;
There seek the genius of your Sire,
His spirit greet ;

Or where, 'mid "lonely heights and hows,"
He paid to Nature tuneful vows ;

¹ "The Poet's grave is in a corner of the churchyard. We looked at it with melancholy and painful reflections, repeating to each other his own verses—

'Is there a man whose judgment clear,' etc."

Extract from the Journal of my Fellow-traveller

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Or wiped his honourable brows
 Bedewed with toil,
While reapers strove, or busy ploughs
 Upturned the soil ;
His judgment with benignant ray
Shall guide, his fancy cheer, your way ;
But ne'er to a seductive lay
 Let faith be given ;
Nor deem that "light which leads astray,
 Is light from Heaven."
Let no mean hope your souls enslave ;
Be independent, generous, brave ;
Your Father such example gave,
 And such revere ;
But be admonished by his grave,
 And think, and fear !

V

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL¹

AT INVERSNEYDE, UPON LOCH LOMOND

SWEET Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower !
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head :
And these grey rocks ; that household lawn ;
Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn ;
This fall of water that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake ;
This little bay ; a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy Abode—
In truth together do ye seem
Like something fashioned in a dream ;
Such Forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep !
But, O fair Creature ! in the light
Of common day, so heavenly bright,
I bless Thee, Vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart ;
God shield thee to thy latest years !
Thee, neither know I, nor thy peers ;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears

¹ This delightful creature and her demeanour are particularly described in my Sister's journal.

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With earnest feeling I shall pray
 For thee when I am far away :
 For never saw I mien, or face,
 In which more plainly I could trace
 Benignity and home-bred sense
 Ripening in perfect innocence.
 Here scattered, like a random seed,
 Remote from men, Thou dost not need
 The embarrassed look of shy distress,
 And maidenly shamefacedness :
 Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
 The freedom of a Mountaineer :
 A face with gladness overspread !
 Soft smiles, by human kindness bred !
 And seemliness complete, that sways
 Thy courtesies, about thee plays ;
 With no restraint, but such as springs
 From quick and eager visitings
 Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
 Of thy few words of English speech :
 A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
 That gives thy gestures grace and life !
 So have I, not unmoved in mind,
 Seen birds of tempest-loving kind—
 Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
 For thee who art so beautiful ?
 O happy pleasure ! here to dwell
 Beside thee in some heathy dell ;
 Adopt your homely ways, and dress,
 A Shepherd, thou a Shepherdess !
 But I could frame a wish for thee
 More like a grave reality :
 Thou art to me but as a wave
 Of the wild sea ; and I would have
 Some claim upon thee, if I could,
 Though but of common neighbourhood.
 What joy to hear thee, and to see
 Thy elder Brother I would be,
 Thy Father—anything to thee !
 Now thanks to Heaven ! that of its grace
 Hath led me to this lonely place.
 Joy have I had ; and going hence
 I bear away my recompence.
 In spots like these it is we prize

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Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes :
Then, why should I be loth to stir ?
I feel this place was made for her ;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland Girl ! from thee to part :
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall ;
And Thee, the Spirit of them all !

VI

GLEN-ALMAIN

OR, THE NARROW GLEN

IN this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian, in the NARROW GLEN ;
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one :
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death ;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last
Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent ;
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And everything unreconciled ;
In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet ;
But this is calm ; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.

Does then the Bard sleep here indeed ?
Or is it but a groundless creed ?
What matters it ?—I blame them not
Whose Fancy in this lonely Spot
Was moved ; and in such way expressed
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A convent, even a hermit's cell,
Would break the silence of this Dell :
It is not quiet, is not ease ;
But something deeper far than these :
The separation that is here
Is of the grave ; and of austere

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Yet happy feelings of the dead :
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race !
Lies buried in this lonely place.

STEPPING WESTWARD¹

“ *What, you are stepping westward ?* ” — “ *Yea.* ”

— “ ’Twould be a *wildish* destiny,
If we, who thus together roam
In a strange Land, and far from home,
Were in this place the guests of Chance :
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
Though home or shelter he had none,
With such a sky to lead him on ?

The dewy ground was dark and cold ;
Behind, all gloomy to behold ;
And stepping westward seemed to be
A kind of *heavenly* destiny :
I liked the greeting ; ’twas a sound
Of something without place or bound ;
And seemed to give me spiritual right
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native lake :
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy :
Its power was felt ; and while my eye
Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,
The echo of the voice enwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of travelling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way.

VIII

THE SOLITARY REAPER

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Von solitary Highland Lass !

¹ While my Fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Ketterine, one fine evening after sunset, in our road to a Hut where, in the course of our Tour, we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed Women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, “ What, you are stepping westward ? ”

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Reaping and singing by herself ;
Stop here, or gently pass !
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain ;
O listen ! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands :
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings ?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago :

Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day ?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again ?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending ;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending ;—
I listened, motionless and still ;
And, as I mounted up the hill
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

IX

ADDRESS TO KILCHURN CASTLE, UPON LOCH AWE¹

CHILD of loud-throated War ! the mountain Stream
Roars in thy hearing ; but thy hour of rest

¹ "From the top of the hill a most impressive scene opened upon our view,—a ruined Castle on an Island (for an Island the flood had made it) at some distance from the shore, backed by a Cove of the Mountain Cruachan, down which came a foaming stream. The Castle occupied every foot of the Island that was visible to us, appearing to rise out of the water,—mists rested upon the mountain side, with spots of sunshine ; there was a mild desolation in the low grounds, a solemn grandeur in the mountains, and the Castle was wild, yet stately—not dismantled of turrets—nor the walls broken down, though obviously a ruin."—*Extract from the Journal of my Companion.*

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Is come, and thou art silent in thy age ;
 Save when the wind sweeps by and sounds are caught
 Ambiguous, neither wholly thine nor theirs.
 Oh ! there is life that breathes not ; Powers there are
 That touch each other to the quick in modes
 Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,
 No soul to dream of. What art Thou, from care
 Cast off—abandoned by thy rugged Sire,
 Nor by soft Peace adopted ; though, in place
 And in dimension, such that thou might'st seem
 But a mere footstool to yon sovereign Lord,
 Huge Cruachan, (a thing that meaner hills
 Might crush, nor know that it had suffered harm ;)
 Yet he, not loth, in favour of thy claims
 To reverence, suspends his own ; submitting
 All that the God of Nature hath conferred,
 All that he holds in common with the stars,
 To the memorial majesty of Time
 Impersonated in thy calm decay !
 Take, then, thy seat, Vicegerent unproved !
 Now, while a farewell gleam of evening light
 Is fondly lingering on thy shattered front,
 Do thou, in turn, be paramount ; and rule
 Over the pomp and beauty of a scene
 Whose mountains, torrents, lake, and woods, unite
 To pay thee homage ; and with these are joined,
 In willing admiration and respect,
 Two Hearts, which in thy presence might be called
 Youthful as Spring.—Shade of departed Power,
 Skeleton of unfleshed humanity,
 The chronicle were welcome that should call
 Into the compass of distinct regard
 The toils and struggles of thy infant years !
 Yon foaming flood seems motionless as ice ;
 Its dizzy turbulence eludes the eye,
 Frozen by distance ; so, majestic Pile,
 To the perception of this Age, appear
 Thy fierce beginnings, softened and subdued
 And quieted in character—the strife,
 The pride, the fury uncontrollable,
 Lost on the aërial heights of the Crusades !¹

¹ The tradition is, that the Castle was built by a Lady during the absence of her Lord in Palestine.

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X

ROB ROY'S GRAVE¹

A FAMOUS man is Robin Hood,
The English ballad-singer's joy !
And Scotland has a thief as good,
An outlaw of as daring mood ;
She has her brave ROB ROY !
Then clear the weeds from off his Grave,
And let us chant a passing stave,
In honour of that Hero brave !

Heaven gave Rob Roy a dauntless heart
And wondrous length and strength of arm :
Nor craved he more to quell his foes,
Or keep his friends from harm.

Yet was Rob Roy as *wise* as brave ;
Forgive me if the phrase be strong ;—
A Poet worthy of Rob Roy
Must scorn a timid song.

Say, then, that he was wise as brave ;
As wise in thought as bold in deed :
For in the principles of things
He sought his moral creed.

Said generous Rob, "What need of books ?
Burn all the statutes and their shelves :
They stir us up against our kind ;
And worse, against ourselves.

"We have a passion—make a law,
Too false to guide us or control !
And for the law itself we fight
In bitterness of soul.

"And, puzzled, blinded thus, we lose
Distinctions that are plain and few :
These find I graven on my heart :
That tells me what to do.

¹ I have since been told that I was misinformed as to the burial-place of Rob Roy. If so, I may plead in excuse that I wrote on apparently good authority, namely, that of a well-educated Lady who lived at the head of the Lake, within a mile or less of the point indicated as containing the remains of One so famous in the neighbourhood.

The history of Rob Roy is sufficiently known ; his grave is near the head of Loch Ketterine, in one of those small pinfold-like Burial-grounds, of neglected and desolate appearance, which the traveller meets with in the Highlands of Scotland.

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“The creatures see of flood and field,
And those that travel on the wind !
With them no strife can last ; they live
In peace, and peace of mind.

“For why?—because the good old rule
Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
That they should take, who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

“A lesson that is quickly learned,
A signal this which all can see !
Thus nothing here provokes the strong
To wanton cruelty.

“All freakishness of mind is checked ;
He tamed, who foolishly aspires ;
While to the measure of his might
Each fashions his desires.

“All kinds, and creatures, stand and fall
By strength of prowess or of wit :
’Tis God’s appointment who must sway,
And who is to submit.

“Since, then, the rule of right is plain,
And longest life is but a day ;
To have my ends, maintain my rights,
I’ll take the shortest way.”

And thus among these rocks he lived,
Through summer heat and winter snow :
The Eagle, he was lord above,
And Rob was lord below.

So was it—*would*, at least, have been
But through untowardness of fate ;
For Polity was then too strong—
He came an age too late ;

Or shall we say an age too soon ?
For, were the bold Man living *now*,
How might he flourish in his pride,
With buds on every bough !

Then rents and factors, rights of chase,
Sheriffs, and lairds and their domains,
Would all have seemed but paltry things,
Not worth a moment’s pains.

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Rob Roy had never lingered here,
To these few meagre Vales confined ;
But thought how wide the world, the times
How fairly to his mind !

And to his Sword he would have said,
“ Do Thou my sovereign will enact
From land to land through half the earth !
Judge thou of law and fact !

“ ’Tis fit that we should do our part,
Becoming, that mankind should learn
That we are not to be surpassed
In fatherly concern.

“ Of old things all are over old,
Of good things none are good enough :—
We’ll show that we can help to frame
A world of other stuff.

“ I, too, will have my kings that take
From me the sign of life and death :
Kingdoms shall shift about, like clouds,
Obedient to my breath.”

And, if the word had been fulfilled,
As *might* have been, then, thought of joy !
France would have had her present Boast,
And we our own Rob Roy !

Oh ! say not so ; compare them not ;
I would not wrong thee, Champion brave !
Would wrong thee nowhere ; least of all
Here standing by thy grave.

For Thou, although with some wild thoughts
Wild Chieftain of a savage Clan !
Hadst this to boast of ; thou didst love
The *liberty* of man.

And, had it been thy lot to live
With us who now behold the light,
Thou would’st have nobly stirred thyself,
And battled for the Right.

For thou wert still the poor man’s stay,
The poor man’s heart, the poor man’s hand
And all the oppressed, who wanted strength,
Had thine at their command.

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Bear witness many a pensive sigh
Of thoughtful Herdsman when he strays
Alone upon Loch Veol's heights,
And by Loch Lomond's braes !

And, far and near, through vale and hill,
Are faces that attest the same ;
The proud heart flashing through the eyes,
At sound of ROB ROY's name.

XI

SONNET

COMPOSED AT ——— CASTLE¹

DEGENERATE Douglas ! oh, the unworthy Lord !
Whom mere despite of heart could so far please,
And love of havoc, (for with such disease
Fame taxes him,) that he could send forth word
To level with the dust a noble horde,
A brotherhood of venerable Trees,
Leaving an ancient dome, and towers like these,
Beggared and outraged !—Many hearts deplored
The fate of those old Trees ; and oft with pain
The traveller, at this day, will stop and gaze
On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to heed :
For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
And the green silent pastures, yet remain.

XII

YARROW UNVISITED²

FROM Stirling castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled ;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled ;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my "*winsome Marrow*,"
"Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."

¹ The Castle here mentioned was Nidpath near Peebles. The person alluded to was the then Duke of Queensbury. The fact was told me by Walter Scott.

² See the various Poems the scene of which is laid upon the banks of the Yarrow ; in particular, the exquisite Ballad of Hamilton beginning

"Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny Bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow !—"

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“ Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 'tis their own ;
Each maiden to her dwelling !
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow !
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

“ There's Galla Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us ;
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus ;
There's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow :
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow ?

“ What's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under ?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder.”
—Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn
My True-love sighed for sorrow ;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow !

“ Oh ! green,” said I, “ are Yarrow's holms
And sweet is Yarrow flowing !
Fair hangs the apple *frae* the rock,¹
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
We'll wander Scotland thorough ;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

“ Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow ;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow !
We will not see them ; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow,
Enough if in our hearts we know
There's such a place as Yarrow.

¹ See Hamilton's Ballad as above.

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"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown !
It must, or we shall rue it :
We have a vision of our own ;
Ah ! why should we undo it ?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome Marrow !
For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow !

"If Care with freezing years should come
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy ;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'Twill soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow ! "

XIII

THE MATRON OF JEDBOROUGH AND HER HUSBAND

AGE ! twine thy brows with fresh spring flowers,
And call a train of laughing Hours ;
And bid them dance, and bid them sing ;
And thou, too, mingle in the ring !
Take to thy heart a new delight ;
If not, make merry in despite
That there is One who scorns thy power :—
But dance ! for under Jedborough Tower
A Matron dwells who, though she bears
The weight of more than seventy years,
Lives in the light of youthful glee,
And she will dance and sing with thee.

Nay ! start not at that Figure—there !
Him who is rooted to his chair !
Look at him—look again ! for he
Hath long been of thy family.
With legs that move not, if they can,
And useless arms, a trunk of man,
He sits, and with a vacant eye ;
A sight to make a stranger sigh !
Deaf, drooping, that is now his doom :
His world is in this single room :
Is this a place for mirthful cheer ?
Can merry-making enter here ?

The joyous Woman is the Mate

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Of him in that forlorn estate !
He breathes a subterraneous damp ;
But bright as Vesper shines her lamp :
He is as mute as Jedborough Tower :
She jocund as it was of yore,
With all its bravery on ; in times
When all alive with merry chimes,
Upon a sun-bright morn of May,
It roused the Vale to holiday.

I praise thee, Matron ! and thy due
Is praise, heroic praise, and true !
With admiration I behold
Thy gladness unsubdued and bold :
Thy looks, thy gestures, all present
The picture of a life well spent :
This do I see ; and something more ;
A strength unthought of heretofore !
Delighted am I for thy sake ;
And yet a higher joy partake :
Our Human-nature throws away
Its second twilight, and looks gay ;
A land of promise and of pride
Unfolding, wide as life is wide.

Ah ! see her helpless Charge ! enclosed
Within himself it seems, composed ;
To fear of loss, and hope of gain,
The strife of happiness and pain,
Utterly dead ! yet in the guise
Of little infants, when their eyes
Begin to follow to and fro
The persons that before them go,
He tracks her motions, quick or slow,
Her buoyant spirit can prevail
Where common cheerfulness would fail ;
She strikes upon him with the heat
Of July suns ; he feels it sweet ;
An animal delight though dim !
'Tis all that now remains for him !

The more I looked, I wondered more—
And, while I scanned them o'er and o'er,
Some inward trouble suddenly
Broke from the Matron's strong black eye—
A remnant of uneasy light,
A flash of something over-bright !
Nor long this mystery did detain

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My thoughts ;—she told in pensive strain
That she had borne a heavy yoke,
Been stricken by a twofold stroke ;
Ill health of body ; and had pined
Beneath worse ailments of the mind.

So be it !—but let praise ascend
To Him who is our lord and friend !
Who from disease and suffering
Hath called for thee a second spring ;
Repaid thee for that sore distress
By no untimely joyousness ;
Which makes of thine a blissful state ;
And cheers thy melancholy Mate !

XIV

“FLY, SOME KIND HARBINGER, TO GRASMERE-DALE!”

FLY, some kind Harbinger, to Grasmere-dale !
Say that we come, and come by this day's light ;
Fly upon swiftest wing round field and height,
But chiefly let one Cottage hear the tale ;
There let a mystery of joy prevail,
The kitten frolic, like a gamesome sprite,
And Rover whine, as at a second sight
Of god that shall not fail :
And face let joy appear ;
Yea, let our Mary's one companion child—
That hath her six weeks' solitude beguiled
With intimations manifold and dear,
While we have wandered over wood and wild—
Smile on his Mother now with bolder cheer.

XV

THE BLIND HIGHLAND BOY

A TALE TOLD BY THE FIRE-SIDE, AFTER RETURNING TO THE
VALE OF GRASMERE¹

Now we are tired of boisterous joy,
Have romped enough, my little Boy !
Jane hangs her head upon my breast,
And you shall bring your stool and rest ;
This corner is your own.

¹ The story was told me by George Mackereth, for many years parish-clerk of Grasmere. He had been an eye-witness of the occurrence. The vessel in reality was a washing-tub, which the little fellow had met with on the shore of the Loch.

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There! take your seat, and let me see
That you can listen quietly :
And, as I promised, I will tell
That strange adventure which befell
A poor blind Highland Boy.

A *Highland* Boy!—why call him so?
Because, my Darlings, ye must know
That, under hills which rise like towers,
Far higher hills than these of ours!
He from his birth had lived.

He ne'er had seen one earthly sight ;
The sun, the day ; the stars, the night ;
Or tree, or butterfly, or flower,
Or fish in stream, or bird in bower,
Or woman, man, or child.

And yet he neither drooped nor pined,
Nor had a melancholy mind ;
For God took pity on the Boy,
And was his friend ; and gave him joy
Of which we nothing know.

His Mother, too, no doubt, above
Her other children him did love :
For, was she here, or was she there,
She thought of him with constant care,
And more than mother's love.

And proud she was of heart, when, clad
In crimson stockings, tartan plaid,
And bonnet with a feather gay,
To Kirk he on the Sabbath day
Went hand in hand with her.

A dog too, had he ; not for need,
But one to play with and to feed ;
Which would have led him, if bereft
Of company or friends, and left
Without a better guide.

And then the bagpipes he could blow—
And thus from house to house would go ;
And all were pleased to hear and see,
For none made sweeter melody
Than did the poor blind Boy.

Yet he had many a restless dream ;
Both when he heard the eagles scream,

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And when he heard the torrents roar,
And heard the water beat the shore
Near which their cottage stood
Beside a lake their cottage stood,
Not small like ours, a peaceful flood ;
But one of mighty size, and strange ;
That, rough or smooth, is full of change,
And stirring in its bed.

For to this lake, by night and day,
The great Sea-water finds its way
Through long, long windings of the hills
And drinks up all the pretty rills
And rivers large and strong :

Then hurries back the road it came—
Returns, on errand still the same ;
This did it when the earth was new ;
And this for evermore will do
As long as earth shall last.

And, with the coming of the tide,
Come boats and ships that safely ride
Between the woods and lofty rocks ;
And to the shepherds with their flocks
Bring tales of distant lands.

And of those tales, whate'er they were,
The blind Boy always had his share ;
Whether of mighty towns, or vales
With warmer suns and softer gales,
Or wonders of the Deep.

Yet more it pleased him, more it stirred,
When from the water-side he heard
The shouting, and the jolly cheers ;
The bustle of the mariners
In stillness or in storm.

But what do his desires avail ?
For He must never handle sail ;
Nor mount the mast, nor row, nor float
In sailor's ship, or fisher's boat,
Upon the rocking waves.

His Mother often thought, and said,
What sin would be upon her head
If she should suffer this : " My Son,
Whate'er you do, leave this undone ;
The danger is so great."

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Thus lived he by Loch Leven's side
Still sounding with the sounding tide,
And heard the billows leap and dance,
Without a shadow of mischance,
Till he was ten years old.

When one day (and now mark me well,
Ye soon shall know how this befell)
He in a vessel of his own,
On the swift flood is hurrying down,
Down to the mighty Sea.

In such a vessel never more
May human creature leave the shore!
If this or that way he should stir,
Woe to the poor blind Mariner!
For death will be his doom.

But say what bears him?—Ye have seen
The Indian's bow, his arrows keen,
Rare beasts, and birds with plumage bright;
Gifts which, for wonder or delight,
Are brought in ships from far.

Such gifts had those seafaring men
Spread round that haven in the glen;
Each hut, perchance, might have its own,
And to the Boy they all were known—
He knew and prized them all.

The rarest was a Turtle-shell
Which he, poor Child, had studied well;
A shell of ample size, and light
As the pearly car of Amphitrite,
That sportive dolphins drew.

And, as a Coracle that braves
On Vaga's breast the fretful waves,
This shell upon the deep would swim,
And gaily lift its fearless brim
Above the tossing surge.

And this the little blind Boy knew:
And he a story strange yet true
Had heard, how in a shell like this
An English Boy, O thought of bliss!
Had stoutly launched from shore;

Launched from the margin of a bay
Among the Indian isles, where lay

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His father's ship, and had sailed far—
To join that gallant ship of war,
In his delightful shell.

Our Highland Boy oft visited
The house that held this prize ; and, led
By choice or chance, did thither come
One day when no one was at home,
And found the door unbarred.

While there he sate, alone and blind,
That story flashed upon his mind ;—
A bold thought roused him, and he took
The shell from out its secret nook,
And bore it on his head.

He launched his vessel,—and in pride
Of spirit, from Loch Leven's side,
Stepped into it—his thoughts all free
As the light breezes that with glee
Sang through the adventurer's hair.

A while he stood upon his feet ;
He felt the motion—took his seat ;
Still better pleased as more and more
The tide retreated from the shore,
And sucked, and sucked him in.

And there he is in face of Heaven.
How rapidly the Child is driven !
The fourth part of a mile, I ween,
He thus had gone, ere he was seen
By any human eye.

But when he was first seen, oh me
What shrieking and what misery !
For many saw ; among the rest
His Mother, she who loved him best
She saw her poor blind Boy.

But for the child, the sightless Boy,
It is the triumph of his joy !
The bravest traveller in balloon,
Mounting as if to reach the moon,
Was never half so blessed.

And let him, let him go his way,
Alone, and innocent, and gay !
For, if good Angels love to wait
On the forlorn unfortunate,
This Child will take no harm.

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But now the passionate lament,
Which from the crowd on shore was sent,
The cries which broke from old and young
In Gaelic, or the English tongue,
Are stifled—all is still.

And quickly with a silent crew
A boat is ready to pursue ;
And from the shore their course they take,
And swiftly down the running lake
They follow the blind Boy.

But soon they move with softer pace ;
So have ye seen the fowler chase
On Grasmere's clear unruffled breast
A youngling of the wild-duck's nest
With deftly-lifted oar ;

Or as the wily sailors crept
To seize (while on the Deep it slept)
The hapless creature which did dwell
Erewhile within the dancing shell,
They steal upon their prey.

With sound the least that can be made,
They follow, more and more afraid,
More cautious as they draw more near ;
But in his darkness he can hear,
And guesses their intent.

"*Lei-gha—Lei-gha*"—he then cried out,
"*Lei-gha—Lei-gha*"—with eager shout ;
Thus did he cry, and thus did pray,
And what he meant was, "Keep away,
And leave me to myself!"

Alas ! and when he felt their hands—
You've often heard of magic wands,
That with a motion overthrow
A palace of the proudest show,
Or melt it into air :

So all his dreams—that inward light
With which his soul had shone so bright—
All vanished ;—'twas a heartfelt cross
To him, a heavy, bitter loss,
As he had ever known.

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But hark ! a gratulating voice,
 With which the very hills rejoice :
 'Tis from the crowd, who tremblingly
 Have watched the event, and now can see
 That he is safe at last.

And then, when he was brought to land,
 Full sure they were a happy band,
 Which, gathering round, did on the banks
 Of that great Water give God thanks,
 And welcomed the poor Child.

And in the general joy of heart
 The blind Boy's little dog took part ;
 He leapt about, and oft did kiss
 His master's hands in sign of bliss,
 With sound like lamentation.

But most of all, his Mother dear,
 She who had fainted with her fear,
 Rejoiced when waking she espies
 The Child ; when she can trust her eyes,
 And touches the blind Boy.

She led him home, and wept amain,
 When he was in the house again :
 Tears flowed in torrents from her eyes ;
 She kissed him—how could she chastise ?
 She was too happy far.

Thus, after he had fondly braved
 The perilous Deep, the Boy was saved ;
 And, though his fancies had been wild,
 Yet he was pleased and reconciled
 To live in peace on shore.

And in the lonely Highland dell
 Still do they keep the Turtle-shell
 And long the story will repeat
 Of the blind Boy's adventurous feat,
 And how he was preserved.

NOTE.—It is recorded in Dampier's *Voyages*, that a boy, son of the captain of a Man-of-War, seated himself in a Turtle-shell, and floated in it from the shore to his father's ship, which lay at anchor at the distance of half a mile. In deference to the opinion of a Friend, I have substituted such a shell for the less elegant vessel in which my blind Voyager did actually entrust himself to the dangerous current of Loch Leven, as was related to me by an eye-witness.

OCTOBER 1803

ONE might believe that natural miseries
Had blasted France, and made of it a land
Unfit for men ; and that in one great band
Her sons were bursting forth, to dwell at ease.
But 'tis a chosen soil, where sun and breeze
Shed gentle favours : rural works are there,
And ordinary business without care ;
Spot rich in all things that can soothe and please !
How piteous then that there should be such dearth
Of knowledge ; that whole myriads should unite
To work against themselves such fell despite :
Should come in phrensy and in drunken mirth,
Impatient to put out the only light
Of Liberty that yet remains on earth !

‘THERE IS A BONDAGE WORSE, FAR WORSE,
TO BEAR ”

THERE is a bondage worse, far worse, to bear
Than his who breathes, by roof, and floor, and wall,
Pent in, a Tyrant's solitary Thrall :
'Tis his who walks about in the open air,
One of a Nation who, henceforth, must wear
Their fetters in their souls. For who could be,
Who, even the best, in such condition, free
From self-reproach, reproach that he must share
With Human-nature? Never be it ours
To see the sun how brightly it will shine,
And know that noble feelings, manly powers,
Instead of gathering strength, must droop and pine ;
And earth with all her pleasant fruits and flowers
Fade, and participate in man's decline.

(1803)

OCTOBER 1803

THESE times strike monied worldlings with dismay :
Even rich men, brave by nature, taint the air
With words of apprehension and despair :
While tens of thousands, thinking on the affray,
Men unto whom sufficient for the day
And minds not stinted or untilled are given,
Sound, healthy, children of the God of heaven,
Are cheerful as the rising sun in May.

170 'England! the Time is Come'

What do we gather hence but firmer faith
That every gift of noble origin
Is breathed upon by Hope's perpetual breath ;
That virtue and the faculties within
Are vital,—and that riches are akin
To fear, to change, to cowardice, and death?

"ENGLAND! THE TIME IS COME WHEN THOU SHOULD'ST WEAN"

ENGLAND! the time is come when thou should'st wean
Thy heart from its emasculating food ;
The truth should now be better understood ;
Old things have been unsettled ; we have seen
Fair seed-time, better harvest might have been
But for thy trespasses ; and, at this day,
If for Greece, Egypt, India, Africa,
Aught good were destined, thou would'st step between.
England! all nations is this charge agree :
But worse, more ignorant in love and hate,
Far—far more abject, is thine Enemy :
Therefore the wise pray for thee, though the freight
Of thy offences be a heavy weight :
Oh grief that Earth's best hopes rest all with Thee !

(1803)

OCTOBER 1803

WHEN, looking on the present face of things,
I see one Man, of men the meanest too !
Raised up to sway the world, to do, undo,
With mighty Nations for his underlings,
The great events with which old story rings
Seem vain and hollow ; I find nothing great :
Nothing is left which I can venerate ;
So that a doubt almost within me springs
Of Providence, such emptiness at length
Seems at the heart of all things. But, great God !
I measure back the steps which I have trod :
And tremble, seeing whence proceeds the strength
Of such poor Instruments, with thoughts sublime
I tremble at the sorrow of the time.

TO THE MEN OF KENT

OCTOBER 1803

VANGUARD of Liberty, ye men of Kent,
Ye children of a Soil that doth advance

In the Pass of Killicranky 171

Her haughty brow against the coast of France,
Now is the time to prove your hardiment !
To France be words of invitation sent !
They from their fields can see the countenance
Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering lance
And hear you shouting forth your brave intent.
Left single, in bold parley, ye, of yore,
Did from the Norman win a gallant wreath ;
Confirmed the charters that were yours before ;—
No parleying now ! In Britain is one breath ;
We all are with you now from shore to shore :—
Ye men of Kent, 'tis victory or death !

IN THE PASS OF KILLICRANKY¹

Six thousand veterans practised in war's game,
Tried men, at Killicranky were arrayed
Against an equal host that wore the plaid,
Shepherds and herdsmen.—Like a whirlwind came
The Highlanders, the slaughter spread like flame ;
And Garry, thundering down his mountain-road,
Was stopped, and could not breathe beneath the load
Of the dead bodies.—'Twas a day of shame
For them whom precept and the pedantry
Of cold mechanic battle do enslave.
O for a single hour of that Dundee,
Who on that day the word of onset gave !
Like conquest would the Men of England see ;
And her Foes find a like inglorious grave.

ANTICIPATION, OCTOBER 1803

SHOUT, for a mighty Victory is won !
On British ground the Invaders are laid low ;
The breath of Heaven has drifted them like snow,
And left them lying in the silent sun,
Never to rise again !—the work is done.
Come forth, ye old men, now in peaceful show
And greet your sons ! drums beat and trumpets blow !
Make merry, wives ! ye little children, stun
Your grandame's ears with pleasure of your noise !
Clap, infants, clap your hands ! Divine must be
That triumph, when the very worst, the pain,
And even the prospect of our brethren slain,
Hath something in it which the heart enjoys :—
In glory will they sleep and endless sanctity.

(1803)

¹An invasion being expected, October 1803.

172 The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale

Lines on the Expected Invasion, 1803

COME ye—who, if (which Heaven avert!) the Land
Were with herself at strife, would take your stand,
Like gallant Falkland, by the Monarch's side,
And, like Montrose, make Loyalty your pride—
Come ye—who, not less zealous, might display
Banners at enmity with regal sway,
And, like the Pym and Miltons of that day,
Think that a State would live in sounder health
If Kingship bowed its head to Commonwealth—
Ye too—whom no discreditable fear
Would keep, perhaps with many a fruitless tear,
Uncertain what to choose and how to steer—
And ye—who might mistake for sober sense
And wise reserve the plea of indolence—
Come ye—whate'er your creed—O waken all,
Whate'er your temper, at your Country's call;
Resolving (this a free-born Nation can)
To have one Soul, and perish to a man,
Or save this honoured Land from every Lord
But British reason and the British sword.

THE FARMER OF TILSBURY VALE¹

'Tis not for the unfeeling, the falsely refined,
The squeamish in taste, and the narrow of mind,
And the small critic wielding his delicate pen,
That I sing of old Adam, the pride of old men.
He dwells in the centre of London's wide Town;
His staff is a sceptre—his grey hairs a crown;
And his bright eyes look brighter, set off by the streak
Of the unfaded rose that still blooms on his cheek.
'Mid the dews, in the sunshine of morn,—'mid the joy
Of the fields, he collected that bloom, when a boy,
That countenance there fashioned, which, spite of a stain
That his life hath received, to the last will remain.
A Farmer he was; and his house far and near
Was the boast of the country for excellent cheer:
How oft have I heard in sweet Tilsbury Vale
Of the silver-rimmed horn whence he dealt his mild ale!

¹ The character of this man was described to me, and the incident upon which the verses turn was told me, by Mr. Pool of Nether Stowey, with whom I became acquainted through our common friend, S. T. Coleridge.

The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale 173

Yet Adam was far as the farthest from ruin,
His fields seemed to know what their Master was doing :
And turnips, and corn-land, and meadow, and lea,
All caught the infection—as generous as he.

Yet Adam prized little the feast and the bowl,—
The fields better suited the ease of his soul :
He strayed through the fields like an indolent wight,
The quiet of nature was Adam's delight.

For Adam was simple in thought ; and the poor,
Familiar with him, made an inn of his door :
He gave them the best that he had ; or, to say
What less may mislead you, they took it away.

Thus thirty smooth years did he thrive on his farm :
The Genius of plenty preserved him from harm :
At length, what to most is a season of sorrow,
His means are run out,—he must beg, or must borrow.

To the neighbours he went,—all were free with their money ;
For his hive had so long been replenished with honey,
That they dreamt not of dearth ;—He continued his rounds,
Knocked here—and knocked there, pounds still adding to
pounds.

He paid what he could with his ill-gotten pelf,
And something, it might be, reserved for himself :
Then (what is too true) without hinting a word,
Turned his back on the country—and off like a bird

You lift up your eyes !—but I guess that you frame
A judgment too harsh of the sin and the shame ;
In him it was scarcely a business of art,
For this he did all in the *ease* of his heart.

To London—a sad emigration I ween—
With his grey hairs he went from the brook and the green ;
And there, with small wealth but his legs and his hands,
As lonely he stood as a crow on the sands.

All trades, as need was, did old Adam assume,—
Served as stable-boy, errand-boy, porter, and groom ;
But nature is gracious, necessity kind,
And, in spite of the shame that may lurk in his mind,

He seems ten birthdays younger, is green and is stout ;
Twice as fast as before does his blood run about ;
You would say that each hair of his beard was alive,
And his fingers are busy as bees in a hive.

For he's not like an Old Man that leisurely goes
 About work that he knows, in a track that he knows ;
 But often his mind is compelled to demur,
 And you guess that the more then his body must stir
 In the throng of the town like a stranger is he,
 Like one whose own country's far over the sea ;
 And Nature, while through the great city he hies,
 Full ten times a day takes his heart by surprise.
 This gives him the fancy of one that is young,
 More of soul in his face than of words on his tongue ;
 Like a maiden of twenty he trembles and sighs,
 And tears of fifteen will come into his eyes.
 What's a tempest to him, or the dry parching heats ?
 Yet he watches the clouds that pass over the streets ;
 With a look of such earnestness often will stand,
 You might think he'd twelve reapers at work in the Strand.
 Where proud Covent-garden, in desolate hours
 Of snow and hoar-frost, spreads her fruits and her flowers,
 Old Adam will smile at the pains that have made
 Poor winter look fine in such strange masquerade.
 'Mid coaches and chariots, a waggon of straw,
 Like a magnet, the heart of old Adam can draw ;
 With a thousand soft pictures his memory will teem,
 And his hearing is touched with the sounds of a dream.
 Up the Haymarket hill he oft whistles his way,
 Thrusts his hands in a waggon, and smells at the hay ;
 He thinks of the fields he so often hath mown,
 And is happy as if the rich freight were his own.
 But chiefly to Smithfield he loves to repair,—
 If you pass by at morning, you'll meet with him there.
 The breath of the cows you may see him inhale,
 And his heart all the while is in Tilsbury Vale.
 Now farewell, old Adam ! when low thou art laid,
 May one blade of grass spring up over thy head ;
 And I hope that thy grave, wheresoever it be,
 Will hear the wind sigh through the leaves of a tree.

(1803)

TO THE CUCKOO¹

O BLITHE New-comer ! I have heard,
 I hear thee and rejoice.
 O Cuckoo ! shall I call thee Bird,
 Or but a wandering Voice ?

¹ Composed in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere.

‘She was a Phantom of Delight’ 175

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.
Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.
Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring !
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery ;
The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to ; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.
To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green ;
And thou wert still a hope, a love ;
Still longed for, never seen.
And I can listen to thee yet ;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.
O blessèd Bird ! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place ;
That is fit home for Thee !

(1804)

“SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT”¹

SHE was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight ;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament ;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair ;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair ;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn ;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The germ of this poem was four lines composed as a part of the verses on the Highland Girl. Though beginning in this way, it was written from my heart, as is sufficiently obvious.

176 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud'

I saw her upon nearer view,
 A Spirit, yet a Woman too !
 Her household motions light and free,
 And steps of virgin-liberty ;
 A countenance in which did meet
 Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
 A Creature not too bright or good
 For human nature's daily food ;
 For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
 Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.
 And now I see with eye serene
 The very pulse of the machine ;
 A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
 A Traveller between life and death ;
 The reason firm, the temperate will,
 Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill ;
 A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
 To warn, to comfort, and command ;
 And yet a Spirit still, and bright
 With something of angelic light.

(1804)

"I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD"¹

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
 That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
 When all at once I saw a crowd,
 A host, of golden daffodils ;
 Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
 Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
 Continuous as the stars that shine
 And twinkle on the milky way,
 They stretched in never-ending line
 Along the margin of a bay :
 Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
 Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.
 The waves beside them danced ; but they
 Out-did the sparkling waves in glee :
 A poet could not but be gay,
 In such a jocund company :
 I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
 What wealth the show to me had brought :

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The Daffodils grew and still grow on the margin of Ullswater, and probably may be seen to this day as beautiful in the month of March, nodding their golden heads beside the dancing and foaming waves.

The Affliction of Margaret ——— 177

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude ;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

(1804)

THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET ———

WHERE art thou, my beloved Son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead ?
Oh find me, prosperous or undone !
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same
That I may rest ; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name ?

II

Seven years, alas ! to have received
No tidings of an only child ;
To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
And been for evermore beguiled ;
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss !
I catch at them, and then I miss ;
Was ever darkness like to this ?

III

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold ;
Well born, well bred ; I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold :
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base ;
And never blush was on my face.

IV

Ah ! little doth the young one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power is in his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares !
He knows it not, he cannot guess ;
Years to a mother bring distress ;
But do not make her love the less.

¹ Whitten at Town-end, Grasmere. This was taken from the case of a poor widow who lived in the town of Penrith. . . . She kept a shop, and when she saw a stranger passing by, she was in the habit of going out into the street to enquire of him after her son.

78 The Affliction of Margaret

Neglect me ! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought ; and, being blind,
Said, " Pride shall help me in my wrong
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed : " and that is true ;
I've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

VI

My Son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,
Oh ! do not dread thy mother's door ;
Think not of me with grief and pain :
I now can see with better eyes ;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And fortune with her gifts and lies.

VII

Alas ! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight ;
They mount—how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight !
Chains tie us down by land and sea ;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

VIII

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men ;
Or thou upon a desert thrown
Inheritest the lion's den ;
Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

IX

I look for ghosts ; but none will force
Their way to me : 'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead ;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

x.

My apprehensions come in crowds ;
 I dread the rustling of the grass ;
 The very shadows of the clouds
 Have power to shake me as they pass :
 I question things and do not find
 One that will answer to my mind ;
 And all the world appears unkind.

xi

Beyond participation lie
 My troubles, and beyond relief :
 If any chance to heave a sigh,
 They pity me, and not my grief.
 Then come to me, my Son, or send
 Some tidings that my woes may end ;
 I have no other earthly friend !

(1804)

THE FORSAKEN¹

THE peace which others seek they find ;
 The heaviest storms not longest last ;
 Heaven grants even to the guiltiest mind
 An amnesty for what is past ;
 When will my sentence be reversed ?
 I only pray to know the worst ;
 And wish as if my heart would burst.
 O weary struggle ! silent years
 Tell seemingly no doubtful tale ;
 And yet they leave it short, and fears
 And hopes are strong and will prevail.
 My calmest faith escapes not pain ;
 And, feeling that the hope is vain,
 I think that he will come again.

(1804)

REPENTANCE

A PASTORAL BALLAD²

THE fields which with covetous spirit we sold,
 Those beautiful fields, the delight of the day,
 Would have brought us more good than a burthen of gold,
 Could we but have been as contented as they.

¹ This was an overflow from the "Affliction of Margaret —," and was excluded as superfluous there, but preserved in the faint hope that it may turn to account by restoring a shy lover to some forsaken damsel.

² Written at Town-end, Grasmere. Suggested by the conversation of our next neighbour, Margaret Ashburner.

When the troublesome Tempter beset us, said I,
 "Let him come, with his purse proudly grasped in his hand;
 But, Allan, be true to me, Allan,—we'll die
 Before he shall go with an inch of the land!"

There dwelt we, as happy as birds in their bowers;
 Unfettered as bees that in gardens abide;
 We could do what we liked with the land, it was ours;
 And for us the brook murmured that ran by its side.

But now we are strangers, go early or late;
 And often, like one overburthened with sin,
 With my hand on the latch of the half-opened gate,
 I look at the fields, but I cannot go in!

When I walk by the hedge on a bright summer's day,
 Or sit in the shade of my grandfather's tree,
 A stern face it puts on, as if ready to say,
 "What ails you, that you must come creeping to me!"

With our pastures about us, we could not be sad;
 Our comfort was near if we ever were crost;
 But the comfort, the blessings, and wealth that we had,
 We slighted them all,—and our birth-right was lost.

Oh, ill-judging sire of an innocent son
 Who must now be a wanderer! but peace to that strain!
 Think of evening's repose when our labour was done,
 The sabbath's return; and its leisure's soft chain!

And in sickness, if night had been sparing of sleep,
 How cheerful, at sunrise, the hill where I stood,
 Looking down on the kine, and our treasure of sheep
 That besprinkled the field; 'twas like youth in my blood!

Now I cleave to the house, and am dull as a snail;
 And, oftentimes, hear the church-bell with a sigh,
 That follows the thought—We've no land in the vale,
 Save six feet of earth where our forefathers lie!

(1804)

THE SEVEN SISTERS

OR, THE SOLITUDE OF BINNORIE

I

SEVEN Daughters had Lord Archibald,
 All children of one mother:
 You could not say in one short day
 What love they bore each other

The Seven Sisters

181

A garland, of seven lilies, wrought !
Seven Sisters that together dwell ;
But he, bold Knight as ever fought,
Their Father, took of them no thought,
He loved the wars so well.
Sing, mournfully, oh ! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie !

Fresh blows the wind, a western wind,
And from the shores of Erin,
Across the wave, a Rover brave
To Binnorie is steering :
Right onward to the Scottish strand
The gallant ship is borne :
The warriors leap upon the land,
And hark ! the Leader of the band
Hath blown his bugle horn.
Sing, mournfully, oh ! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

III

Beside a grotto of their own,
With boughs above them closing,
The Seven are laid, and in the shade
They lie like fawns reposing.
But now, upstarting with affright
At noise of man and steed,
Away they fly to left, to right—
Of your fair household, Father-knight,
Methinks you take small heed !
Sing, mournfully, oh ! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

IV

Away the seven fair Campbells fly,
And, over hill and hollow,
With menace proud, and insult loud,
The youthful Rovers follow.
Cried they, " Your Father loves to roam :
Enough for him to find
The empty house when he comes home ;
For us your yellow ringlets comb,
For us be fair and kind !"
Sing, mournfully, oh ! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

182 Address to my Infant Daughter

V

Some close behind, some side to side,
Like clouds in stormy weather ;
 They run, and cry, "Nay, let us die,
 And let us die together."
 A lake was near ; the shore was steep ;
 There never foot had been ;
 They ran, and with a desperate leap
 Together plunged into the deep,
 Nor ever more were seen.
 Sing, mournfully, oh ! mournfully,
 The solitude of Binnorie.

VI

The stream that flows out of the lake,
 As through the glen it rambles,
 Repeats a moan o'er moss and stone,
 For those seven lovely Campbells.
 Seven little Islands, green and bare,
 Have risen from out the deep :
 The fishers say, those sisters fair,
 By faeries all are buried there,
 And there together sleep.
 Sing, mournfully, oh ! mournfully,
 The solitude of Binnorie.

(1804)

ADDRESS TO MY INFANT DAUGHTER, DORA

ON BEING REMINDED THAT SHE WAS A MONTH OLD THAT
 DAY, SEPTEMBER 16

—HAST thou then survived—

Mild Offspring of infirm humanity,
 Meek Infant ! among all forlornest things
 The most forlorn—one life of that bright star,
 The second glory of the Heavens?—Thou hast,
 Already hast survived that great decay,
 That transformation through the wide earth felt,
 And by all nations. In that Being's sight
 From whom the Race of human kind proceed,
 A thousand years are but as yesterday :
 And one day's narrow circuit is to Him
 Not less capacious than a thousand years.
 But what is time ? What outward glory ? neither
 A measure is of Thee, whose claims extend

Address to my Infant Daughter 183

Through "heaven's eternal year."—Yet hail to Thee,
Frail, feeble Monthling!—by that name, methinks,
Thy scanty breathing-time is portioned out
Not idly.—Hadst thou been of Indian birth,
Couched on a casual bed of moss and leaves,
And rudely canopied by leafy boughs,
Or to the churlish elements exposed
On the blank plains,—the coldness of the night,
Or the night's darkness, or its cheerful face
Of beauty, by the changing moon adorned,
Would, with imperious admonition, then
Have scored thine age, and punctually timed
Thine infant history, on the minds of those
Who might have wandered with thee.—Mother's love,
Nor less than mother's love in other breasts,
Will, among us warm-clad and warmly housed,
Do for thee what the finger of the heavens
Doth all too often harshly execute
For thy unblest coevals, amid wilds
Where fancy hath small liberty to grace
The affections, to exalt them or refine;
And the maternal sympathy itself,
Though strong, is, in the main, a joyless tie
Of naked instinct, wound about the heart.
Happier, far happier is thy lot and ours!
Even now—to solemnise thy helpless state,
And to enliven in the mind's regard
Thy passive beauty—parallels have risen,
Resemblances, or contrasts, that connect,
Within the region of a father's thoughts,
Thee and thy mate and sister of the sky.
And first;—thy sinless progress, through a world
By sorrow darkened and by care disturbed,
Apt likeness bears to hers, through gathered clouds,
Moving untouched in silver purity,
And cheering oft-times their reluctant gloom.
Fair are ye both, and both are free from stain:
But thou, how leisurely thou fill'st thy horn
With brightness! leaving her to post along,
And range about, disquieted in change,
And still impatient of the shape she wears.
Once up, once down the hill, one journey, Babe,
That will suffice thee; and it seems that now
Thou hast fore-knowledge that such task is thine;
Thou travellest so contentedly, and sleep'st

184 The Kitten and Falling Leaves

In such a heedless peace. Alas ! full soon
 Hath this conception, grateful to behold,
 Changed countenance, like an object sullied o'er
 By breathing mist ; and thine appears to be
 A mournful labour, while to her is given
 Hope, and a renovation without end.
 —That smile forbids the thought ; for on thy face
 Smiles are beginning, like the beams of dawn,
 To shoot and circulate ; smiles have there been seen
 Tranquil assurances that Heaven supports
 The feeble motions of thy life, and cheers
 Thy loneliness : or shall those smiles be called
 Feelers of love, put forth as if to explore
 This untried world, and to prepare thy way
 Through a strait passage intricate and dim ?
 Such are they ; and the same are tokens, signs,
 Which, when the appointed season hath arrived,
 Joy, as her holiest language, shall adopt ;
 And Reason's godlike Power be proud to own.

(1804)

THE KITTEN AND FALLING LEAVES¹

THAT way look, my Infant, lo !
 What a pretty baby-show !
 See the Kitten on the wall,
 Sporting with the leaves that fall,
 Withered leaves — one—two—and three—
 From the lofty elder-tree !
 Through the calm and frosty air
 Of this morning bright and fair,
 Eddying round and round they sink
 Softly, slowly : one might think,
 From the motions that are made,
 Every little leaf conveyed
 Sylph or Faery hither tending,—
 To this lower world descending,
 Each invisible and mute,
 In his wavering parachute.
 —But the Kitten, how she starts,
 Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts !

¹ Seen at Town-end, Grasmere. The elder-bush has long since disap-
 cared : it hung over the wall near the Cottage ; and the Kitten
 continued to leap up, catching the leaves as here described. The infant
 was Dora.

The Kitten and Falling Leaves 185

First at one, and then its fellow
Just as light and just as yellow ;
There are many now—now one—
Now they stop and there are none.
What intenseness of desire
In her upward eye of fire !
With a tiger-leap half-way
Now she meets the coming prey,
Lets it go as fast, and then
Has it in her power again :
Now she works with three or four,
Like an Indian conjurer ;
Quick as he in feats of art,
Far beyond in joy of heart.
Were her antics played in the eye
Of a thousand standers-by,
Clapping hands with shout and stare,
What would little Tabby care
For the plaudits of the crowd ?
Over happy to be proud,
Over wealthy in the treasure
Of her own exceeding pleasure !
'Tis a pretty baby-treat ;
Nor, I deem, for me unmeet ;
Here, for neither Babe nor me,
Other play-mate can I see.
Of the countless living things,
That with stir of feet and wings
(In the sun or under shade,
Upon bough or grassy blade)
And with busy revellings,
Chirp and song, and murmurings,
Made this orchard's narrow space,
And this vale so blithe a place ;
Multitudes are swept away
Never more to breathe the day :
Some are sleeping ; some in bands
Travelled into distant lands ;
Others slunk to moor and wood,
Far from human neighbourhood ;
And, among the Kinds that keep
With us closer fellowship,
With us openly abide,
All have laid their mirth aside.

Where is he that giddy Sprite,

186 The Kitten and Falling Leaves

Blue-cap, with his colours bright,
 Who was blest as bird could be,
 Feeding in the apple-tree :
 Made such wanton spoil and rout,
 Turning blossoms inside out ;
 Hung—head pointing towards the ground—
 Fluttered, perched, into a round
 Bound himself, and then unbound ;
 Lithest, gaudiest Harlequin !
 Prettiest Tumbler ever seen !
 Light of heart and light of limb ;
 What is now become of Him ?
 Lambs, that through the mountains went
 Frisking, bleating merriment,
 When the year was in its prime,
 They are sobered by this time.
 If you look to vale or hill,
 If you listen, all is still,
 Save a little neighbouring rill,
 That from out the rocky ground
 Strikes a solitary sound.
 Vainly glitter hill and plain,
 And the air is calm in vain ;
 Vainly Morning spreads the lure
 Of a sky serene and pure ;
 Creature none can she decoy
 Into open sign of joy :
 Is it that they have a fear
 Of the dreary season near ?
 Or that other pleasures be
 Sweeter even than gaiety ?

Yet, whate'er enjoyments dwell
 In the impenetrable cell
 Of the silent heart which Nature
 Furnishes to every creature ;
 Whatsoe'er we feel and know
 Too sedate for outward show,
 Such a light of gladness breaks,
Pretty Kitten ! from thy freaks,—
 Spreads with such a living grace
 O'er my little Dora's face ;
 Yes, the sight so stirs and charms
 Thee, Baby, laughing in my arms,
 That almost I could repine
 That your transports are not mine,

To the Spade of a Friend 187

That I do not wholly fare
Even as ye do, thoughtless pair !
And I will have my careless season
Spite of melancholy reason,
Will walk through life in such a way
That, when time brings on decay,
Now and then I may possess
Hours of perfect gladness.
—Pleased by any random toy ;
By a kitten's busy joy,
Or an infant's laughing eye
Sharing in the ecstasy ;
I would fare like that or this,
Find my wisdom in my bliss ;
Keep the sprightly soul awake,
And have faculties to take,
Even from things by sorrow wrought,
Matter for a jocund thought,
Spite of care, and spite of grief,
To gambol with Life's falling Leaf.

(1804)

TO THE SPADE OF A FRIEND¹

(AN AGRICULTURIST)

COMPOSED WHILE WE WERE LABOURING TOGETHER IN
HIS PLEASURE-GROUND

SPADE ! with which Wilkinson hath tilled his lands,
And shaped these pleasant walks by Emont's side,
Thou art a tool of honour in my hands ;
I press thee, through the yielding soil, with pride.
Rare master has it been thy lot to know ;
Long hast Thou served a man to reason true ;
Whose life combines the best of high and low,
The labouring many and the resting few ;
Health, meekness, ardour, quietness secure,
And industry of body and of mind ;
And elegant enjoyments, that are pure
As nature is ; too pure to be refined.
Here often hast Thou heard the Poet sing
In concord with his river murmuring by ;
Or in some silent field, while timid spring
Is yet uncheered by other minstrelsy.

¹ Thomas Wilkinson, a Quaker.

188 At Applethwaite, near Keswick

Who shall inherit Thee when death has laid
Low in the darksome cell thine own dear lord?
That man will have a trophy, humble Spade!
A trophy nobler than a conqueror's sword.

If he be one that feels, with skill to part
False praise from true, or, greater from the less,
Thee will he welcome to his hand and heart,
Thou monument of peaceful happiness!

He will not dread with Thee a toilsome day—
Thee his loved servant, his inspiring mate!
And, when thou art past service, worn away,
No dull oblivious nook shall hide thy fate.

His thrift thy uselessness will never scorn;
An *heir-loom* in his cottage wilt thou be:—
High will he hang thee up, well pleased to adorn
His rustic chimney with the last of Thee!

(1804)

AT APPLETHWAITE, NEAR KESWICK¹

BEAUMONT! it was thy wish that I should rear
A seemly Cottage in this sunny Dell,
On favoured ground, thy gift, where I might dwell
In neighbourhood with One to me most dear,
That undivided we from year to year
Might work in our high Calling—a bright hope
To which our fancies, mingling, gave free scope
Till checked by some necessities severe.
And should these slacken, honoured BEAUMONT! still
Even then we may perhaps in vain implore
Leave of our fate thy wishes to fulfil.
Whether this boon be granted us or not,
Old Skiddaw will look down upon the Spot
With pride, the Muses love it evermore.

(1804)

¹ This place was presented to me by Sir George Beaumont with a view to the erection of a house upon it, for the sake of being near to Coleridge, then living, and likely to remain, at Greta Hall, near Keswick. The *severe* necessities that prevented this arose from his domestic situation. This little property, with a considerable addition that still leaves it very small, lies beautifully upon the banks of a rill that gurgles down the side of Skiddaw, and the orchard and other parts of the grounds command a magnificent prospect of Derwent Water, and of the mountains of Borrowdale and Newlands. Many years ago I gave the place to my daughter.

TO THE SUPREME BEING

FROM THE ITALIAN OF MICHAEL ANGELO

THE prayers I make will then be sweet indeed
 If Thou the spirit give by which I pray :
 My unassisted heart is barren clay,
 That of its native self can nothing feed :
 Of good and pious works Thou art the seed,
 That quickens only where Thou say'st it may :
 Unless Thou show to us thine own true way
 No man can find it : Father ! Thou must lead.
 Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
 By which such virtue may in me be bred
 That in thy holy footsteps I may tread ;
 The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
 That I may have the power to sing of Thee,
 And sound thy praises everlastingly.

(1804)

ODE TO DUTY¹

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God !
 O Duty ! if that name thou love
 Who art a light to guide, a rod
 To check the erring, and reprove ;
 Thou, who art victory and law
 When empty terrors overawe ;
 From vain temptations dost set free ;
 And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity !
 There are who ask not if thine eye
 Be on them ; who, in love and truth,
 Where no misgiving is, rely
 Upon the genial sense of youth :
 Glad Hearts ! without reproach or blot
 Who do thy work, and know it not :

¹ This ode is on the model of Gray's Ode to Adversity, which is copied from Horace's Ode to Fortune. Many and many a time have I been twitted by my wife and sister for having forgotten this dedication of myself to the stern lawgiver. Transgressor indeed I have been, from hour to hour, from day to day : I would fain hope, however, not more flagrantly or in a worse way than most of my tuneful brethren. But these last words are in a wrong strain. We should be rigorous to ourselves and forbearing, if not indulgent, to others, and, if we make comparisons at all, it ought to be with those who have morally excelled us.

"Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eò perductus, ut non tantum rectè facere possim, sed nisi rectè facere non possim."

Oh ! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power ! around them cast,
Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed ;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.
I, loving freedom, and untried ;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust :
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray ;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.
Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control ;
But in the quietness of thought :
Me this unchartered freedom tires ;
I feel the weight of chance-desires :
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.
Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face :
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads ;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong ;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and
strong.
To humbler functions, awful Power !
I call thee : I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour ;
Oh, let my weakness have an end !
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice ;
The confidence of reason give ;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live !
(1805)

To a Sky-Lark

191

TO A SKY-LARK

UP with me ! up with me into the clouds !
For thy song, Lark, is strong ;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds !
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind !
I have walked through wildernesses dreary
And to-day my heart is weary ;
Had I now the wings of a Faery,
Up to thee would I fly.
There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine ;
Lift me, guide me high and high
To thy banqueting-place in the sky.

Joyous as morning
Thou art laughing and scorning ;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark ! thou would'st be loth
To be such a traveller as I.
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain river
Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both !
Alas ! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.

(1805)

FIDELITY¹

A BARKING sound the Shepherd hears,
A cry as of a dog or fox ;
He halts—and searches with his eyes

¹ The young man whose death gave occasion to this poem was named Charles Gough, and had come early in the spring to Paterdale for the sake of angling. While attempting to cross over Helvellyn to Grasmere he slipped from a steep part of the rock where the ice was not thawed, and perished. His body was discovered as is told in this poem.

Among the scattered rocks :
And now at distance can discern
A stirring in a brake of fern ;
And instantly a dog is seen,
Glancing through that covert green.

The Dog is not of mountain breed ;
Its motions, too, are wild and shy ;
With something, as the Shepherd thinks,
Unusual in its cry :
Nor is there any one in sight
All round, in hollow or on height ;
Nor shout, nor whistle strikes his ear ;
What is the creature doing here ?

It was a cove, a huge recess,
That keeps, till June, December's snow ;
A lofty precipice in front,
A silent tarn¹ below !
Far in the bosom of Helvellyn,
Remote from public road or dwelling,
Pathway, or cultivated land ;
From trace of human foot or hand.

There sometimes doth a leaping fish
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer ;
The crags repeat the raven's croak,
In symphony austere ;
Thither the rainbow comes—the cloud—
And mists that spread the flying shroud ;
And sunbeams ; and the sounding blast,
That, if it could, would hurry past ;
But that enormous barrier holds it fast.

Not free from boding thoughts, a while
The Shepherd stood ; then makes his way
O'er rocks and stones, following the Dog
As quickly as he may ;
Nor far had gone before he found
A human skeleton on the ground ;
The appalled Discoverer with a sigh
Looks round, to learn the history.

From those abrupt and perilous rocks
The Man had fallen, that place of fear !
At length upon the Shepherd's mind
It breaks, and all is clear :

¹ Tarn is a *small* Mere or Lake, mostly high up in the mountains.

He instantly recalled the name,
 And who he was, and whence he came ;
 Remembered, too, the very day
 On which the Traveller passed this way.
 But hear a wonder, for whose sake
 This lamentable tale I tell !
 A lasting monument of words
 This wonder merits well.
 The Dog, which still was hovering nigh,
 Repeating the same timid cry,
 This Dog had been through three months' space
 A dweller in that savage place.
 Yes, proof was plain that, since the day
 When this ill-fated Traveller died,
 The Dog had watched about the spot,
 Or by his master's side :
 How nourished here through such long time
 He knows, who gave that love sublime ;
 And gave that strength of feeling, great
 Above all human estimate !

(1805)

INCIDENT

CHARACTERISTIC OF A FAVOURITE DOG¹

ON his morning rounds the Master
 Goes to learn how all things fare ;
 Searches pasture after pasture,
 Sheep and cattle eyes with care ;
 And, for silence or for talk,
 He hath comrades in his walk ;
 Four dogs, each pair of different breed,
 Distinguished two for scent, and two for speed.
 See a hare before him started !
 —Off they fly in earnest chase ;
 Every dog is eager-hearted,
 All the four are in the race :
 And the hare whom they pursue,
 Knows from instinct what to do ;
 Her hope is near : no turn she makes ;
 But, like an arrow, to the river takes.

¹ This Dog I knew well. It belonged to Mrs. Wordsworth's brother, Mr. Thomas Hutchinson, who then lived at Sockburn on the Tees, a beautiful retired situation where I used to visit him and his sisters before my marriage. My sister and I spent many months there after our return from Germany in 1799.

Tribute

Deep the river was, and crusted
 Thinly by a one night's frost ;
 But the nimble Hare hath trusted
 To the ice, and safely crost ;
 She hath crost, and without heed
 All are following at full speed,
 When, lo ! the ice, so thinly spread,
 Breaks—and the greyhound, DART, is overhead !

Better fate have PRINCE and SWALLOW—
 See them cleaving to the sport !
 MUSIC has no heart to follow,
 Little MUSIC, she stops short.
 She hath neither wish nor heart,
 Hers is now another part :
 A loving creature she, and brave !
 And fondly strives her struggling friend to save.

From the brink her paws she stretches,
 Very hands as you would say !
 And afflicting moans she fetches,
 As he breaks the ice away.
 For herself she hath no fears,—
 Him alone she sees and hears,—
 Makes efforts with complainings ; nor gives o'er
 Until her fellow sinks to re-appear no more.

(1805)

TRIBUTE

TO THE MEMORY OF THE SAME DOG

LIE here, without a record of thy worth,
 Beneath a covering of the common earth !
 It is not from unwillingness to praise,
 Or want of love, that here no Stone we raise ;
 More thou deserv'st ; but *this* man gives to man,
 Brother to brother, *this* is all we can.
 Yet they to whom thy virtues made thee dear
 Shall find thee through all changes of the year :
 This Oak points out thy grave ; the silent tree
 Will gladly stand a monument of thee.
 We grieved for thee, and wished thy end were past ;
 And willingly have laid thee here at last :
 For thou hadst lived till everything that cheers
 In thee had yielded to the weight of years ;
 Extreme old age had wasted thee away,
 And left thee but a glimmering of the day :

Thy ears were deaf, and feeble were thy knees,—
 I saw thee stagger in the summer breeze,
 Too weak to stand against its sportive breath,
 And ready for the gentlest stroke of death.
 It came, and we were glad ; yet tears were shed ;
 Both man and woman wept when thou wert dead ;
 Not only for a thousand thoughts that were,
 Old household thoughts, in which thou hadst thy share ;
 But for some precious boons vouchsafed to thee,
 Found scarcely anywhere in like degree !
 For love, that comes wherever life and sense
 Are given by God, in thee was most intense .
 A chain of heart, a feeling of the mind,
 A tender sympathy, which did thee bind
 Not only to us Men, but to thy Kind :
 Yea, for thy fellow-brutes in thee we saw
 A soul of love, love's intellectual law :—
 Hence, if we wept, it was not done in shame ;
 Our tears from passion and from reason came,
 And, therefore, shalt thou be an honoured name !

(1805)

ELEGIAC STANZAS

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE, IN A STORM,
 PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

I WAS thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile !
 Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee :
 I saw thee every day ; and all the while
 Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.
 So pure the sky, so quiet was the air !
 So like, so very like, was day to day !
 Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there ;
 It trembled, but it never passed away.
 How perfect was the calm ! it seemed no sleep ;
 No mood, which season takes away, or brings :
 I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
 Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.
 Ah ! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
 To express what then I saw ; and add the gleam,
 The light that never was, on sea or land,
 The consecration, and the Poet's dream ;
 I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile,
 Amid a world how different from this !

Beside a sea that could not cease to smile ;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house divine
Of peaceful years ; a chronicle of heaven ;—
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife ;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such Picture would I at that time have made :
And seen the soul of truth in every part,
A stedfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no more ;
I have submitted to a new control :
A power is gone, which nothing can restore ;
A deep distress hath humanised my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been :
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old ;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, Friend ! who would have been the Friend,
If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend ;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 'tis a passionate Work !—yet wise and well,
Well chosen is the spirit that is here ;
That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear !

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind !
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied ; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne !
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

(1805)

ELEGIAC VERSES

IN MEMORY OF MY BROTHER, JOHN WORDSWORTH,
COMMANDER OF THE E.I. COMPANY'S SHIP THE EARL OF ABERGA-
VENNY, IN WHICH HE PERISHED BY CALAMITOUS SHIPWRECK,
FEB. 6, 1805¹

I

THE Sheep-boy whistled loud, and lo !
That instant, startled by the shock,
The Buzzard mounted from the rock
Deliberate and slow :
Lord of the air, he took his flight ;
Oh ! could he on that woeful night
Have lent his wing, my Brother dear,
For one poor moment's space to Thee,
And all who struggled with the Sea,
When safety was so near.

II

Thus in the weakness of my heart
I spoke (but let that pang be still)
When rising from the rock at will,
I saw the Bird depart.
And let me calmly bless the Power
That meets me in this unknown Flower.
Affecting type of him I mourn !
With calmness suffer and believe,
And grieve, and know that I must grieve,
Not cheerless, though forlorn.

III

Here did we stop ; and here looked round
While each into himself descends,
For that last thought of parting Friends
That is not to be found.

¹ Composed near the Mountain track that leads from Grasmere through Grisdale Hawes, where it descends towards Paterdale.

" Here did we stop ; and here looked round,
While each into himself descends."

The point is two or three yards below the outlet of Grisdale tarn, on a foot-road by which a horse may pass to Paterdale—a ridge of Helvellyn on the left, and the summit of Fairfield on the right.

*H 203

Hidden was Grasmere Vale from sight,
 Our home and his, his heart's delight,
 His quiet heart's selected home.
 But time before him melts away,
 And he hath feeling of a day
 Of blessedness to come.

IV

Full soon in sorrow did I weep,
 Taught that the mutual hope was dust,
 In sorrow, but for higher trust,
 How miserably deep !
 All vanished in a single word,
 A breath, a sound, and scarcely heard :
 Sea—Ship—drowned—Shipwreck—so it came,
 The meek, the brave, the good, was gone ;
 He who had been our living John
 Was nothing but a name.

V

That was indeed a parting ! oh,
 Glad am I, glad that it is past ;
 For there were some on whom it cast
 Unutterable woe.
 But they as well as I have gains ;—
 From many a humble source, to pains
 Like these, there comes a mild release ;
 Even here I feel it, even this Plant
 Is in its beauty ministrant
 To comfort and to peace.

VI

He would have loved thy modest grace,
 Meek Flower ! To Him I would have said,
 " It grows upon its native bed
 Beside our Parting-place ;
 There, cleaving to the ground, it lies
 With multitude of purple eyes,
 Spangling a cushion green like moss ;
 But we will see it, joyful tide !
 Some day, to see it in its pride,
 The mountain will we cross."

VII

—Brother and Friend, if verse of mine
 Have power to make thy virtues known,

‘Attractions of the Busy World’ 199

Here let a monumental Stone
Stand—sacred as a Shrine ;
And to the few who pass this way,
Traveller or Shepherd, let it say,
Long as these mighty rocks endure,—
Oh do not Thou too fondly brood,
Although deserving of all good,
On any earthly hope, however pure !¹

(1805)

“WHEN, TO THE ATTRACTIONS OF THE
BUSY WORLD”²

WHEN, to the attractions of the busy world,
Preferring studious leisure, I had chosen
A habitation in this peaceful Vale,
Sharp season followed of continual storm
In deepest winter ; and, from week to week,
Pathway, and lane, and public road, were clogged
With frequent showers of snow. Upon a hill
At a short distance from my cottage, stands
A stately Fir-grove, whither I was wont
To hasten, for I found, beneath the roof
Of that perennial shade, a cloistral place
Of refuge, with an unincumbered floor.
Here, in safe covert, on the shallow snow,
And, sometimes, on a speck of visible earth,
The redbreast near me hopped ; nor was I loth
To sympathise with vulgar coppice birds
That, for protection from the nipping blast,
Hither repaired.—A single beech-tree grew
Within this grove of firs ! and, on the fork
Of that one beech, appeared a thrush’s nest ;
A last year’s nest, conspicuously built
At such small elevation from the ground
As gave sure sign that they, who in that house
Of nature and of love had made their home
Amid the fir-trees, all the summer long
Dwelt in a tranquil spot. And oftentimes,
A few sheep, stragglers from some mountain-flock,

¹ The plant alluded to is the Moss Campion (*Silene acaulis* of Linnaeus).

² The grove still exists, but the plantation has been walled in, and is not so accessible as when my brother John wore the path in the manner here described. The grove was a favourite haunt with us all while we lived at Town-end.

200 'Attractions of the Busy World'

Would watch my motions with suspicious stare,
 From the remotest outskirts of the grove,—
 Some nook where they had made their final stand,
 Huddling together from two fears—the fear
 Of me and of the storm. Full many an hour
 Here did I lose. But in this grove the trees
 Had been so thickly planted, and had thriven
 In such perplexed and intricate array ;
 That vainly did I seek, beneath their stems
 A length of open space, where to and fro
 My feet might move without concern or care ;
 And, baffled thus, though earth from day to day
 Was fettered, and the air by storm disturbed,
 I ceased the shelter to frequent,—and prized,
 Less than I wished to prize, that calm recess.

The snows dissolved, and genial Spring returned
 To clothe the fields with verdure. Other haunts
 Meanwhile were mine ; till, one bright April day,
 By chance retiring from the glare of noon
 To this forsaken covert, there I found
 A hoary pathway traced between the trees,
 And winding on with such an easy line
 Along a natural opening, that I stood
 Much wondering how I could have sought in vain
 For what was now so obvious. To abide,
 For an allotted interval of ease,
 Under my cottage-roof, had gladly come
 From the wild sea a cherished Visitant ;
 And with the sight of this same path—begun,
 Begun and ended, in the shady grove,
 Pleasant conviction flashed upon my mind
 That, to this opportune recess allured,
 He had surveyed it with a finer eye,
 A heart more wakeful ; and had worn the track
 By pacing here, unwearied and alone,
 In that habitual restlessness of foot
 That haunts the Sailor measuring o'er and o'er
 His short domain upon the vessel's deck,
 While she pursues her course through the dreary sea.

When thou hadst quitted Esthwaite's pleasant shore,
 And taken thy first leave of those green hills
 And rocks that were the play-ground of thy youth,
 Year followed year, my Brother ! and we two,
 Conversing not, knew little in what mould
 Each other's mind was fashioned ; and at length,

‘Attractions of the Busy World’ 201

When once again we met in Grasmere Vale,
Between us there was little other bond
Than common feelings of fraternal love.
But thou, a Schoolboy, to the sea hadst carried
Undying recollections ! Nature there
Was with thee ; she, who loved us both, she still
Was with thee ; and even so didst thou become
A *silent* Poet ; from the solitude
Of the vast sea didst bring a watchful heart
Still couchant, an inevitable ear,
And an eye practised like a blind man’s touch.
—Back to the joyless Ocean thou art gone ;
Nor from this vestige of thy musing hours
Could I withhold thy honoured name,—and now
I love the fir-grove with a perfect love.
Thither do I withdraw when cloudless suns
Shine hot, or wind blows troublesome and strong,
And there I sit at evening, when the steep
Of Silver-how, and Grasmere’s peaceful lake,
And one green island, gleam between the stems
Of the dark firs, a visionary scene !
And, while I gaze upon the spectacle
Of clouded splendour, on this dream-like sight
Of solemn loveliness, I think on thee,
My Brother, and on all which thou hast lost.
Nor seldom, if I rightly guess, while Thou,
Muttering the verses which I muttered first
Among the mountains, through the midnight watch
Art pacing thoughtfully the vessel’s deck
In some far region, here, while o’er my head,
At every impulse of the moving breeze,
The fir-grove murmurs with a sea-like sound,
Alone I tread this path ;—for aught I know,
Timing my steps to thine ; and, with a store
Of undistinguishable sympathies,
Mingling most earnest wishes for the day
When we, and others whom we love, shall meet
A second time, in Grasmere’s happy Vale.

(1805)

NOTE.—This wish was not granted ; the lamented Person not long after perished by shipwreck, in discharge of his duty as Commander of the Honourable East India Company’s vessel, the *Earl of Abergavenny*.

LOUISA

I¹AFTER ACCOMPANYING HER ON A MOUNTAIN
EXCURSION

I MET Louisa in the shade,
And, having seen that lovely Maid,
Why should I fear to say
That, nymph-like, she is fleet and strong,
And down the rocks can leap along
Like rivulets in May?

She loves her fire, her cottage-home ;
Yet o'er the moorland will she roam
In weather rough and bleak ;
And, when against the wind she strains,
Oh ! might I kiss the mountain rains
That sparkle on her cheek.

Take all that's mine "beneath the moon,"
If I with her but half a noon
May sit beneath the walls
Of some old cave, or mossy nook,
When up she winds along the brook
To hunt the waterfalls.

(1805)

II

TO A YOUNG LADY WHO HAD BEEN REPROACHED
FOR TAKING LONG WALKS IN THE COUNTRY

DEAR Child of Nature, let them rail !
—There is a nest in a green dale,
A harbour and a hold ;
Where thou, a Wife and Friend, shalt see
Thy own heart-stirring days, and be
A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a shepherd boy,
And treading among flowers of joy
Which at no season fade,
Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,
Shalt show us how divine a thing
A Woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee, when grey hairs are nigh
A melancholy slave ;

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere.

Character of the Happy Warrior 203

But an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,
Shall lead thee to thy grave.

(1805)

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR ¹

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
—It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
—'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
—Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand

¹ [Inspired partly by Nelson's, partly by John Wordsworth's character.
—Ed.] ;

204 Character of the Happy Warrior

On honourable terms, or else retire,
 And in himself possess his own desire ;
 Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
 Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim ;
 And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
 For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state ;
 Whom they must follow ; on whose head must fall,
 Like showers of manna, if they come at all :
 Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
 Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
 A constant influence, a peculiar grace ;
 But who, if he be called upon to face
 Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
 Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
 Is happy as a Lover ; and attired
 With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired ;
 And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
 In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw ;
 Or if an unexpected call succeed,
 Come when it will, is equal to the need :
 —He who, though thus endued as with a sense
 And faculty for storm and turbulence,
 Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
 To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes ;
 Sweet images ! which, wheresoe'er he be,
 Are at his heart ; and such fidelity
 It is his darling passion to approve ;
 More brave for this, that he hath much to love :—
 'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
 Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
 Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
 Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
 Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—
 Plays, in the many games of life, that one
 Where what he most doth value must be won :
 Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
 Nor thought of tender happiness betray ;
 Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
 Looks forward, persevering to the last,
 From well to better, daily self-surpast :
 Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
 For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
 Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
 And leave a dead unprofitable name—
 Finds comfort in himself and in his cause ;

The Horn of Egremont Castle 205

And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause :
This is the happy Warrior ; this is He
That every Man in arms should wish to be.

(1806)

THE HORN OF EGREMONT CASTLE¹

ERE the Brothers through the gateway
Issued forth with old and young,
To the Horn Sir Eustace pointed
Which for ages there had hung.
Horn it was which none could sound,
No one upon living ground,
Save He who came as rightful Heir
To Egremont's Domains and Castle fair.

Heirs from times of earliest record
Had the House of Lucie born,
Who of right had held the Lordship
Claimed by proof upon the Horn :
Each at the appointed hour
Tried the Horn,—it owned his power ;
He was acknowledged : and the blast,
Which good Sir Eustace sounded, was the last.

With his lance Sir Eustace pointed,
And to Hubert thus said he,
" What I speak this Horn shall witness
For thy better memory.
Hear, then, and neglect me not !
At this time, and on this spot,
The words are uttered from my heart,
As my last earnest prayer ere we depart.

" On good service we are going
Life to risk by sea and land,
In which course if Christ our Saviour
Do my sinful soul demand,
Hither come thou back straightway,
Hubert, if alive that day ;
Return, and sound the Horn, that we
May have a living House still left in thee ! "

" Fear not," quickly answered Hubert
" As I am thy Father's son,

¹ A tradition transferred from the ancient mansion of Hutton John, the seat of the Hudlestons to Egremont Castle.

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What thou askest, noble Brother,
 With God's favour shall be done."
 So were both right well content :
 Forth they from the Castle went,
 And at the head of their Array
 To Palestine the Brothers took their way.

Side by side they fought (the Lucies
 Were a line for valour famed),
 And where'er their strokes alighted,
 There the Saracens were tamed.
 Whence, then, could it come—the thought—
 By what evil spirit brought?
 Oh! can a brave Man wish to take
 His Brother's life, for Lands' and Castle's sake?

"Sir!" the Ruffians said to Hubert,
 "Deep he lies in Jordan flood."
 Stricken by this ill assurance,
 Pale and trembling Hubert stood.
 "Take your earnings."—Oh! that I
 Could have *seen* my Brother die!
 It was a pang that vexed him then;
 And oft returned, again, and yet again.

Months passed on, and no Sir Eustace!
 Nor of him were tidings heard;
 Wherefore, bold as day, the Murderer
 Back again to England steered.
 To his Castle Hubert sped;
 Nothing has he now to dread.
 But silent and by stealth he came,
 And at an hour which nobody could name

None could tell if it were night-time,
 Night or day, at even or morn;
 No one's eye had seen him enter,
 No one's ear had heard the Horn.
 But bold Hubert lives in glee:
 Months and years went smilingly;
 With plenty was his table spread;
 And bright the Lady is who shares his bed.

Likewise he had sons and daughters;
 And, as good men do, he sate
 At his board by these surrounded,
 Flourishing in fair estate.

And while thus in open day
 Once he sate, as old books say,
 A blast was uttered from the Horn,
 Where by the Castle-gate it hung forlorn.
 'Tis the breath of good Sir Eustace !
 He is come to claim his right :
 Ancient castle, woods, and mountains
 Hear the challenge with delight.
 Hubert ! though the blast be blown
 He is helpless and alone :
 Thou hast a dungeon, speak the word !
 And there he may be lodged, and thou be Lord.
 Speak !—astounded Hubert cannot ;
 And, if power to speak he had,
 All are daunted, all the household
 Smitten to the heart, and sad.
 'Tis Sir Eustace ; if it be
 Living man, it must be he !
 Thus Hubert thought in his dismay,
 And by a postern-gate he slunk away.
 Long, and long was he unheard of :
 To his Brother then he came,
 Made confession, asked forgiveness,
 Asked it by a brother's name,
 And by all the saints in heaven ;
 And of Eustace was forgiven :
 Then in a convent went to hide
 His melancholy head, and there he died.
 But Sir Eustace, whom good angels
 Had preserved from murderers' hands,
 And from Pagan chains had rescued,
 Lived with honour on his lands.
 Sons he had, saw sons of theirs :
 And through ages, heirs of heirs,
 A long posterity renowned,
 Sounded the Horn which they alone could sound.

(1806)

A COMPLAINT¹

THERE is a change—and I am poor,
 Your love hath been, not long ago,
 A fountain at my fond heart's door,
 Whose only business was to flow ;

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere. Suggested by a change in the manner of a friend [S. T. C.—*Ed.*].

And flow it did: not taking heed
Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count!
Blest was I then all bliss above!
Now, for that consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,
What have I? shall I dare to tell?
A comfortless and hidden well.

A well of love—it may be deep—
I trust it is,—and never dry:
What matter? if the waters sleep
In silence and obscurity.
—Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

(1806)

STRAY PLEASURES ¹

“—*Pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find*.”

By their floating mill,
That lies dead and still,
Behold yon Prisoners three,
The Miller with two Dames, on the breast of the Thames ¹
The platform is small, but gives room for them all;
And they're dancing merrily.

From the shore come the notes
To their mill where it floats,
To their house and their mill tethered fast:
To the small wooden isle where, their work to beguile,
They from morning to even take whatever is given;—
And many a blithe day they have past.

In sight of the spires,
All alive with the fires
Of the sun going down to his rest,
In the broad open eye of the solitary sky,
They dance,—there are three, as jocund as free,
While they dance on the calm river's breast.

¹ Suggested on the Thames by the sight of one of those floating mills that used to be seen there. This I noticed on the Surrey side between Somerset House and Blackfriars Bridge. Charles Lamb was with me at the time; and I thought it remarkable that I should have to point out to *him*, an idolatrous Londoner, a sight so interesting as the happy group dancing on the platform.

Man and Maidens wheel,
 They themselves make the reel,
 And their music's a prey which they seize ;
 It plays not for them,—what matter ? 'tis theirs ;
 And if they had care, it has scattered their cares,
 While they dance, crying, " Long as ye please ! "

They dance not for me,
 Yet mine is their glee !
 Thus pleasure is spread through the earth
 In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find ;
 Thus a rich loving-kindness, redundantly kind,
 Moves all nature to gladness and mirth.

The showers of the spring
 Rouse the birds, and they sing ;
 If the wind do but stir for his proper delight,
 Each leaf, that and this, his neighbour will kiss ;
 Each wave, one and t' other, speeds after his brother :
 They are happy, for that is their right !
 (1806)

POWER OF MUSIC ¹

AN Orpheus ! an Orpheus ! yes, Faith may grow bold,
 And take to herself all the wonders of old ;—
 Near the stately Pantheon you'll meet with the same
 In the street that from Oxford hath borrowed its name.

His station is there ; and he works on the crowd,
 He sways them with harmony merry and loud ;
 He fills with his power all their hearts to the brim—
 Was aught ever heard like his fiddle and him ?

What an eager assembly ! what an empire is this !
 The weary have life, and the hungry have bliss ;
 The mourner is cheered, and the anxious have rest ;
 And the guilt-burthened soul is no longer oppress.

As the Moon brightens round her the clouds of the night,
 So He, where he stands, is a centre of light ;
 It gleams on the face, there, of dusky-browed Jack,
 And the pale-visaged Baker's, with basket on back.

That errand-bound 'Prentice was passing in haste—
 What matter ! he's caught—and his time runs to waste ;
 The Newsman is stopped, though he stops on the fret ;
 And the half-breathless Lamplighter—he's in the net !

¹ Taken from life.

The Porter sits down on the weight which he bore ;
 The Lass with her barrow wheels hither her store ;—
 If a thief could be here he might pilfer at ease ;
 She sees the Musician, 'tis all that she sees !

He stands, backed by the wall ;—he abates not his din,
 His hat gives him vigour, with boons dropping in,
 From the old and the young, from the poorest ; and there !
 The one-pennied Boy has his penny to spare.

O blest are the hearers, and proud be the hand
 Of the pleasure it spreads through so thankful a band ;
 I am glad for him, blind as he is !—all the while
 If they speak 'tis to praise, and they praise with a smile.

That tall Man, a giant in bulk and in height,
 Not an inch of his body is free from delight ;
 Can he keep himself still, if he would ? oh, not he !
 The music stirs in him like wind through a tree.

Mark that Cripple who leans on his crutch ; like a tower
 That long has leaned forward, leans hour after hour !—
 That Mother, whose spirit in fetters is bound,
 While she dandles the Babe in her arms to the sound.

Now, coaches and chariots ! roar on like a stream ;
 Here are twenty souls happy as souls in a dream :
 They are deaf to your murmurs—they care not for you,
 Nor what ye are flying, nor what ye pursue !
 (1806)

STAR-GAZERS ¹

WHAT crowd is this ? what have we here ! we must not pass
 it by ;

A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the sky :
 Long is it as a barber's pole, or mast of little boat,
 Some little pleasure-skiff, that doth on Thames's waters float.
 The Showman chooses well his place, 'tis Leicester's busy
 Square ;

And is as happy in his night, for the heavens are blue and
 fair ;

Calm, though impatient, is the crowd ; each stands ready
 with the fee,

And envies him that's looking ;—what an insight must it be !

Yet, Showman, where can lie the cause ? Shall thy Imple-
 ment have blame,

A boaster, that when he is tried, fails, and is put to shame ?

¹ Observed by me in Leicester-square.

‘Yes, it was the Mountain ‘Echo’ 211

Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in fault?
Their eyes, or minds? or, finally, is yon resplendent vault?
Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we have here?
Or gives a thing but small delight that never can be dear?
The silver moon with all her vales, and hills of mightiest
fame,
Doth she betray us when they’re seen? or are they but a
name?

Or is it rather that Conceit rapacious is and strong,
And bounty never yields so much but it seems to do her
wrong?

Or is it, that when human Souls a journey long have had
And are returned into themselves, they cannot but be sad?

Or must we be constrained to think that these Spectators
rude,

Poor in estate, of manners base, men of the multitude,
Have souls which never yet have risen, and therefore
prostrate lie?

No, no, this cannot be ;—men thirst for power and majesty !

Does, then, a deep and earnest thought the blissful mind
employ

Of him who gazes, or has gazed? a grave and steady joy,
That doth reject all show of pride, admits no outward sign,
Because not of this noisy world, but silent and divine !

Whatever be the cause, ’tis sure that they who pry and pore
Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy than before :
One after One they take their turn, nor have I one espied
That doth not slackly go away, as if dissatisfied.

(1806)

“YES, IT WAS THE MOUNTAIN ECHO”¹

Yes, it was the mountain Echo,
Solitary, clear, profound,
Answering to the shouting Cuckoo,
Giving to her sound for sound !

Unsolicited reply
To a babbling wanderer sent ;
Like her ordinary ‘cry,
Like—but oh, how different !

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The echo came from Nab-scar, when I was walking on the opposite side of Rydal Mere.

‘Nuns Fret Not’

Hears not also mortal Life?
 Hear not we, unthinking Creatures!
 Slaves of folly, love, or strife—
 Voices of two different natures?

Have not *we* too?—yes, we have
 Answers, and we know not whence;
 Echoes from beyond the grave,
 Recognised intelligence!

Such rebounds our inward ear
 Catches sometimes from afar—
 Listen, ponder, hold them dear;
 For of God,—of God they are.

(1806)

“NUNS FRET NOT AT THEIR CONVENT’S
 NARROW ROOM”¹

NUNS fret not at their convent’s narrow room;
 And hermits are contented with their cells;
 And students with their pensive citadels;
 Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
 Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
 High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
 Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
 In truth the prison, unto which we doom
 Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
 In sundry moods, ’twas pastime to be bound
 Within the Sonnet’s scanty plot of ground;
 Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
 Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
 Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

(1806)

PERSONAL TALK²

I AM not One who much or oft delight
 To season my fireside with personal talk.—

¹ Town-end, Grasmere.

² Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The last line but two stood, at first, better and more characteristically, thus:

“By my half-kitchen and half-parlour fire.”

My Sister and I were in the habit of having the tea-kettle in our little sitting-room; and we toasted the bread ourselves.

Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
 Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight :
 And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
 Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
 These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
 Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.
 Better than such discourse doth silence long,
 Long, barren silence, square with my desire ;
 To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
 In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
 And listen to the flapping of the flame,
 Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

"Yet life," you say, "is life ; we have seen and see,
 And with a living pleasure we describe ;
 And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
 The languid mind into activity.
 Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee
 Are fostered by the comment and the gibe."
 Even be it so ; yet still among your tribe,
 Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not me !
 Children are blest, and powerful ; their world lies
 More justly balanced ; partly at their feet,
 And part far from them : sweetest melodies
 Are those that are by distance made more sweet ;
 Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
 He is a Slave ; the meanest we can meet !

III

Wings have we,—and as far as we can go,
 We may find pleasure : wilderness and wood,
 Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
 Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
 Dreams, books, are each a world ; and books, we know,
 Are a substantial world, both pure and good :
 Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
 Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
 There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,—
 Matter wherein right voluble I am,
 To which I listen with a ready ear ;
 Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—
 The gentle Lady married to the Moor ;
 And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

IV

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
 Great gains are mine ; for thus I live remote
 From evil-speaking ; rancour, never sought,
 Comes to me not ; malignant truth, or lie.
 Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
 Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought :
 And thus from day to day my little boat
 Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
 Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
 Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
 The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
 Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays !
 Oh ! might my name be numbered among theirs,
 Then gladly would I end my mortal days.
 (1806)

ADMONITION¹

WELL may'st thou halt—and gaze with brightening eye !
 The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
 Hath stirred thee deeply ; with its own dear brook,
 Its own small pasture, almost its own sky !
 But covet not the Abode ;—forbear to sigh,
 As many do, repining while they look ;
 Intruders—who would tear from Nature's book
 This precious leaf, with harsh impiety.
 Think what the home must be if it were thine,
 Even thine, though few thy wants !—Roof, window, door,
 The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
 The roses to the porch which they entwine :
 Yea, all, that now enchants thee, from the day
 On which it should be touched, would melt away.
 (1806)

“BELOVED VALE ! I SAID, WHEN I SHALL
 CON ”

“BELOVED Vale !” I said, “when I shall con
 Those many records of my childish years,
 Remembrance of myself and of my peers
 Will press me down : to think of what is gone

¹ Intended more particularly for the perusal of those who may have happened to be enamoured of some beautiful Place of Retreat, in the Country of the Lakes.

Will be an awful thought, if life have one.”
 But, when into the Vale I came, no fears
 Distressed me ; from mine eyes escaped no tears ;
 Deep thought, or dread remembrance, had I none.
 By doubts and thousand petty fancies crost
 I stood, of simple shame the blushing Thrall ;
 So narrow seemed the brooks, the fields so small !
 A juggler’s balls old Time about him tossed ;
 I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed ; and all
 The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

(1806)

‘HOW SWEET IT IS, WHEN MOTHER FANCY
 ROCKS ”

How sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks
 The wayward brain, to saunter through a wood !
 An old place, full of many a lovely brood,
 Tall trees, green arbours, and ground-flowers in flocks ;
 And wild rose tip-toe upon hawthorn stocks,
 Like a bold Girl, who plays her agile pranks
 At Wakes and Fairs with wandering Mountebanks,—
 When she stands cresting the Clown’s head, and mocks
 The crowd beneath her. Verily I think,
 Such place to me is sometimes like a dream
 Or map of the whole world : thoughts, link by link,
 Enter through ears and eyesight, with such gleam
 Of all things, that at last in fear I shrink,
 And leap at once from the delicious stream.

“THOSE WORDS WERE UTTERED AS IN
 PENSIVE MOOD ”

“———they are of the sky,
 And from our earthly memory fade away.”

THOSE words were uttered as in pensive mood
 We turned, departing from that solemn sight :
 A contrast and reproach to gross delight,
 And life’s unspiritual pleasures daily wooed !
 But now upon this thought I cannot brood ;
 It is unstable as a dream of night ;
 Nor will I praise a cloud, however bright,
 Disparaging Man’s gifts, and proper food.
 Grove, isle, with every shape of sky-built dome
 Though clad in colours beautiful and pure,

216 'With how Sad Steps, O Moon'

Find in the heart of man no natural home :
The immortal Mind craves objects that endure :
These cleave to it ; from these it cannot roam,
Nor they from it : their friendship is secure.

(1806)

COMPOSED BY THE SIDE OF GRASMERE
LAKE

CLOUDS, lingering yet, extend in solid bars
Through the grey west ; and lo ! these waters, steeled
By breezeless air to smoothest polish, yield
A vivid repetition of the stars ;
Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars
Amid his fellows beautifully revealed
At happy distance from earth's groaning field,
Where ruthless mortals wage incessant wars.
Is it a mirror ? or the nether Sphere
Opening to view the abyss in which she feeds
Her own calm fires ?—But list ! a voice is near ;
Great Pan himself low-whispering through the reeds,
" Be thankful, thou ; for, if unholy deeds
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here ! "

(1806)

"WITH HOW SAD STEPS, O MOON, THOU
CLIMB'ST THE SKY"

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky,
" How silently, and with how wan a face ! "
Where art thou ? Thou so often seen on high
Running among the clouds a Wood-nymph's race !
Unhappy Nuns, whose common breath's a sigh
Which they would stifle, move at such a pace !
The northern Wind, to call thee to the chase,
Must blow to-night his bugle horn. Had I
The power of Merlin, Goddess ! this should be :
And all the stars, fast as the clouds were riven,
Should sally forth, to keep thee company,
Hurrying and sparkling through the clear blue heaven,
But, Cynthia ! should to thee the palm be given,
Queen both for beauty and for majesty.

(1806)

'With Ships the Sea was Sprinkled' 217

"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US; LATE AND SOON"

THE world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;
It moves us not.—Great God ! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

1861

"WITH SHIPS THE SEA WAS SPRINKLED FAR AND NIGH"

WITH Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed ;
Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
Some veering up and down, one knew not why.
A goodly Vessel did I then espy
Come like a giant from a haven broad ;
And lustily along the bay she strode,
Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.
This Ship was nought to me, nor I to her
Yet I pursued her with a Lover's look ;
This Ship to all the rest did I prefer :
When will she turn, and whither ? She will brook
No tarrying ; where She comes the winds must stir :
On went She, and due north her journey took.

1861

"WHERE LIES THE LAND TO WHICH YON SHIP MUST GO?"

WHERE lies the Land to which yon Ship must go ?
Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day,
Festively she puts forth in trim array ;
Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow ?

What boots the inquiry?—Neither friend nor foe
 She cares for ; let her travel where she may,
 She finds familiar names, a beaten way
 Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
 Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark ?
 And, almost as it was when ships were rare,
 (From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
 Crossing the waters) doubt, and something dark,
 Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
 Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark !
 (1806)

TO SLEEP

“O GENTLE SLEEP! DO THEY BELONG TO THEE?”

O GENTLE SLEEP! do they belong to thee,
 These twinklings of oblivion? Thou dost love
 To sit in meekness, like the brooding Dove,
 A captive never wishing to be free.
 This tiresome night, O Sleep! thou art to me
 A Fly, that up and down himself doth shove
 Upon a fretful rivulet, now above
 Now on the water vexed with mockery.
 I have no pain that calls for patience, no ;
 Hence am I cross and peevish as a child :
 Am pleased by fits to have thee for my foe,
 Yet ever willing to be reconciled :
 O gentle Creature! do not use me so,
 But once and deeply let me be beguiled.
 (1806)

II

“A FLOCK OF SHEEP THAT LEISURELY PASS BY”

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
 One after one ; the sound of rain, and bees
 Murmuring ; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
 Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky ;
 I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
 Sleepless! and soon the small birds' melodies
 Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees ;
 And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
 Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
 And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth :
 So do not let me wear to-night away :
 Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth ?

From Italian of Michael Angelo 219

Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health !
(1806)

III

"FOND WORDS HAVE OFT BEEN SPOKEN TO THEE,
SLEEP "

FOND words have oft been spoken to thee, Sleep !
And thou hast had thy store of tenderest names ;
The very sweetest, Fancy culls or frames,
When thankfulness of heart is strong and deep !
Dear Bosom-child we call thee, that dost steep
In rich reward all suffering ; Balm that tames¹
All anguish ; Saint that evil thoughts and aims
Takest away, and into souls dost creep,
Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I alone,
I surely not a man ungently made,
Call thee worst Tyrant by which Flesh is crost ?
Perverse, self-willed to own and to disown,
Mere slave of them who never for thee prayed,
Still last to come where thou art wanted most !
(1806)

FROM THE ITALIAN OF MICHAEL ANGELO²

I

"YES ! HOPE MAY WITH MY STRONG DESIRE KEEP
PACE "

Yes ! hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed ;
For if of our affections none finds grace
In sight of Heaven, then, wherefore hath God made
The world which we inhabit ? Better plea
Love cannot have, than that in loving thee
Glory to that eternal Peace is paid,
Who such divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.

¹ See Sidney's XXXIXth sonnet in "Astrophel and Stella :"

"Come, Sleepe ! O Sleepe, the certaine knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balme of woe,
The poore man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
Th' indifferent judge betweene the high and low."

² Translations from Michael Angelo, done at the request of Mr. Duppa, whose acquaintance I made through Mr. Southey. Mr. Duppa was engaged in writing the life of Michael Angelo, and applied to Mr. Southey and myself to furnish some specimens of his poetic genius.

220 To Memory of Raisley Calvert

His hope is treacherous only whose love dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour ;
But, in chaste hearts uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.
(1806)

II

“NO MORTAL OBJECT DID THESE EYES BEHOLD,”

No mortal object did these eyes behold
When first they met the placid light of thine,
And my Soul felt her destiny divine,
And hope of endless peace in me grew bold :
Heaven-born, the Soul a heavenward course must hold ;
Beyond the visible world she soars to seek
(For what delights the sense is false and weak)
Ideal Form, the universal mould.
The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
In that which perishes : nor will he lend
His heart to aught which doth on time depend.
’Tis sense, unbridled will, and not true love,
That kills the soul : love betters what is best,
Even here below, but more in heaven above.
(1806)

TO THE MEMORY OF RAISLEY CALVERT¹

CALVERT ! it must not be unheard by them
Who may respect my name, that I to thee
Owed many years of early liberty.
This care was thine when sickness did condemn
Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem—
That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
Where’er I liked ; and finally array
My temples with the Muse’s diadem.
Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth ;
If there be aught of pure, or good, or great,
In my past verse ; or shall be, in the lays
Of higher mood, which now I meditate ;—
It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived, Youth !
To think how much of this will be thy praise.
(1806)

¹ This young man, Raisley Calvert, to whom I was so much indebted, died at Penrith, 1795. [Wordsworth nursed him in his last illness with care and affection, and after his death it was found he had left the poet a legacy of £900. This was done, wrote Wordsworth, “entirely from a confidence on his part that I had powers and attainments which might be of use to mankind.”—*Ed.*]

Even so for me a Vision sanctified 221

"METHOUGHT I SAW THE FOOTSTEPS OF A
THRONE" ¹

I

METHOUGHT I saw the footsteps of a throne
Which mists and vapours from mine eyes did shroud—
Nor view of who might sit thereon allowed ;
But all the steps and ground about were strown
With sights the ruefullest that flesh and bone
Ever put on ; a miserable crowd,
Sick, hale, old, young, who cried before that cloud,
"Thou art our king, O Death ! to thee we groan."
Those steps I clomb ; the mists before me gave
Smooth way ; and I beheld the face of one
Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,
With her face up to heaven ; that seemed to have
Pleasing remembrance of a thought foregone ;
A lovely Beauty in a summer grave !

..c.c1

"EVEN SO FOR ME A VISION SANCTIFIED"

EVEN so for me a Vision sanctified
The sway of Death ; long ere mine eyes had seen
Thy countenance—the still rapture of thy mien—
When thou, dear Sister ! wert become Death's Bride :
No trace of pain or languor could abide
That change :—age on thy brow was smoothed—thy cold
Wan cheek at once was privileged to unfold
A loveliness to living youth denied.
Oh ! if within me hope should e'er decline,
The lamp of faith, lost Friend ! too faintly burn ;
Then may that heaven-revealing smile of thine,
The bright assurance, visibly return :
And let my spirit in that power divine
Rejoice, as, through that power, it ceased to mourn.

(Nov. 1836)

LINES

Composed at Grasmere, during a walk one Evening, after a stormy day, the Author having just read in a Newspaper that the dissolution of Mr. Fox was hourly expected.

LOUD is the Vale ! the Voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are gone, -

¹ The latter part of this Sonnet was a great favourite with my sister S. H. When I saw her lying in death, I could not resist the impulse to compose the Sonnet that follows it.

A mighty unison of streams !
Of all her Voices, One !

Loud is the Vale ;—this inland Depth
In peace is roaring like the Sea ;
Yon star upon the mountain-top
Is listening quietly.

Sad was I, even to pain deprest,
Importunate and heavy load !¹
The Comforter hath found me here,
Upon this lonely road ;

And many thousands now are sad—
Wait the fulfilment of their fear ;
For he must die who is their stay,
Their glory disappear.

A Power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss
But when the great and good depart
What is it more than this—

That Man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return ?—
Such ebb and flow must ever be,
Then wherefore should we mourn ?

(1806)

NOVEMBER 1806

ANOTHER year !—another deadly blow !
Another mighty Empire overthrown !
And We are left, or shall be left, alone ;
The last that dare to struggle with the Foe,
'Tis well ! from this day forward we shall know
That in ourselves our safety must be sought ;
That by our own right hands it must be wrought ;
That we must stand unpropped, or be laid low.
O dastard whom such foretaste doth not cheer !
We shall exult, if they who rule the land
Be men who hold its many blessings dear,
Wise, upright, valiant ; not a servile band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour which they do not understand.

¹ Importuna e grave salma.—MICHAEL ANGELO.

A PROPHECY. FEBRUARY 1807

HIGH deeds, O Germans, are to come from you !
 Thus in your books the record shall be found,
 "A watchword was pronounced, a potent sound—
 ARMINIUS !—all the people quaked like dew
 Stirred by the breeze ; they rose, a Nation, true,
 True to herself—the mighty Germany,
 She of the Danube and the Northern Sea,
 She rose, and off at once the yoke she threw.
 All power was given her in the dreadful trance ;
 Those new-born Kings she withered like a flame."
 —Woe to them all ! but heaviest woe and shame
 To that Bavarian who could first advance
 His banner in accursed league with France,
 First open traitor to the German name !

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND¹

Two Voices are there ; one is of the sea,
 One of the mountains ; each a mighty Voice :
 In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
 They were thy chosen music, Liberty !
 There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
 Thou fought'st against him ; but hast vainly striven :
 Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
 Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
 Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft :
 Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left ;
 For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
 That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
 And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
 And neither awful Voice be heard by thee !

(1807)

TO THOMAS CLARKSON

ON THE FINAL PASSING OF THE BILL FOR THE
 ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE

CLARKSON ! it was an obstinate hill to climb :
 How toilsome—nay, how dire—it was, by thee
 Is known ; by none, perhaps, so feelingly :
 But thou, who, starting in thy fervent prime,

¹This was composed while pacing to and fro between the Hall of Coleorton, then rebuilt, and the vineyard Farm-house of the Estate, in which we lived for three or ten months.

Didst first lead forth that enterprise sublime,
 Hast heard the constant Voice its charge repeat,
 Which, out of thy young heart's oracular seat,
 First roused thee.—O true yoke-fellow of Time,
 Duty's intrepid liegeman, see, the palm
 Is won, and by all Nations shall be worn !
 The blood-stained Writing is for ever torn ;
 And thou henceforth wilt have a good man's calm,
 A great man's happiness ; thy zeal shall find
 Repose at length, firm friend of human kind !
 (*March* 1807)

GIPSIES ¹

YET are they here the same unbroken knot
 Of human Beings, in the self-same spot !
 Men, women, children, yea the frame
 Of the whole spectacle the same !
 Only their fire seems bolder, yielding light,
 Now deep and red, the colouring of night ;
 That on their Gipsy-faces falls,
 Their bed of straw and blanket-walls.
 —Twelve hours, twelve bounteous hours are gone, while I
 Have been a traveller under open sky,
 Much witnessing of change and cheer,
 Yet as I left I find them here !
 The weary Sun betook himself to rest ;—
 Then issued Vesper from the fulgent west,
 Outshining like a visible God
 The glorious path in which he trod.
 And now, ascending, after one dark hour
 And one night's diminution of her power,
 Behold the mighty Moon ! this way
 She looks as if at them—but they
 Regard not her :—oh better wrong and strife
 (By nature transient) than this torpid life ;
 Life which the very stars reprove
 As on their silent tasks they move !
 Yet, witness all that stirs in heaven or earth !
 In scorn I speak not ;—they are what their birth
 And breeding suffer them to be ;
 Wild outcasts of society !
 (1807)

¹ Composed at Coleorton. I had observed them, as here described,¹ near Castle Donnington, on my way to and from Derby.

"O NIGHTINGALE ! THOU SURELY ART " ¹

O NIGHTINGALE ! thou surely art
A creature of a " fiery heart " :—
These notes of thine—they pierce and pierce ;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce !
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine ;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night ;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.
I heard a Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day ;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze :
He did not cease ; but cooed—and cooed ;
And somewhat pensively he wooed ;
He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending ;
Of serious faith, and inward glee ;
That was the song—the song for me !

(1807)

TO LADY BEAUMONT ²

LADY ! the songs of Spring were in the grove
While I was shaping beds for winter flowers ;
While I was planting green unfading bowers,
And shrubs—to hang upon the warm alcove,
And sheltering wall ; and still, as Fancy wove
The dream, to time and nature's blended powers
I gave this paradise for winter hours,
A labyrinth, Lady ! which your feet shall rove.
Yes ! when the sun of life more feebly shines,
Becoming thoughts, I trust, of solemn gloom
Or of high gladness you shall hither bring ;
And these perennial bowers and murmuring pines
Be gracious as the music and the bloom
And all the mighty ravishment of spring.

(1807)

¹ Written at Town-end, Grasmere. (*Mrs. W. says in a note*—"AT COLEORTON.")

² The winter garden of Coleorton, fashioned out of an old quarry under the superintendence and direction of Mrs. Wordsworth and my sister Dorothy, during the winter and spring we resided there.

226 Song at Feast of Brougham Castle

“THOUGH NARROW BE THAT OLD
MAN’S CARES”¹

“——gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.”

THOUGH narrow be that old Man’s cares, and near,
The poor old Man is greater than he seems :
For he hath waking empire, wide as dreams ;
An ample sovereignty of eye and ear.
Rich are his walks with supernatural cheer ;
The region of his inner spirit teems
With vital sounds and monitory gleams
Of high astonishment and pleasing fear.
He the seven birds hath seen, that never part,
Seen the SEVEN WHISTLERS in their nightly rounds,
And counted them : and oftentimes will start—
For overhead are sweeping GABRIEL’S HOUNDS
Doomed, with their impious Lord, the flying Hart
To chase for ever, on aerial grounds !
(1807)

SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE

UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD, THE SHEPHERD,
TO THE ESTATES AND HONOURS OF HIS ANCESTORS²

HIGH in the breathless Hall the Minstrel sate,
And Emont’s murmur mingled with the Song.—
The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal strain that hath been silent long :—
“From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last ;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming :

¹ Written at Coleorton. This old man’s name was Mitchell. He was, in all his ways and conversation, a great curiosity, both individually and as a representative of past times. His chief employment was keeping watch at night by pacing round the house, at that time building, to keep off depredators. He has often told me gravely of having seen the Seven Whistlers and the Hounds as here described.

² Composed at Coleorton while I was walking to and fro along the path that led from Sir George Beaumont’s Farm-house, where we resided, to the Hall which was building at that time.

Song at Feast of Brougham Castle 227

Both roses flourish, red and white :
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended.—
Joy ! joy to both ! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster !
Behold her how She smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array !
Fair greeting doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall ;
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful Lord,
A Clifford to his own restored !

They came with banner, spear, and shield,
And it was proved in Bosworth-field.
Not long the Avenger was withstood—
Earth helped him with the cry of blood :¹
St. George was for us, and the might
Of blessed Angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the Land has uttered forth,
We loudest in the faithful north :
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming ;
Our strong-abodes and castles see
The glory of their loyalty.

How glad is Skipton at this hour—
Though lonely, a deserted Tower ;
Knight, squire, and yeoman, page and groom :
We have them at the feast of Brough'm.
How glad Pendragon—though the sleep
Of years be on her !—She shall reap
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.
Rejoiced is Brough, right glad I deem
Beside her little humble stream ;
And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden's course to guard ;
They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely Tower :—
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair House by Emont's side,
This day, distinguished without peer
To see her Master and to cheer—
Him, and his Lady-mother dear !

¹ This line is from Sir John Beaumont's "Battle of Bosworth Field."

228 Song at Feast of Brougham Castle

Oh ! it was a time forlorn
 When the fatherless was born—
 Give her wings that she may fly,
 Or she sees her infant die !
 Swords that are with slaughter wild
 Hunt the Mother and the Child.
 Who will take them from the light ?
 —Yonder is a man in sight—
 Yonder is a house—but where ?
 No, they must not enter there.
 To the caves, and to the brooks,
 To the clouds of heaven she looks ;
 She is speechless, but her eyes
 Pray in ghostly agonies.
 Blissful Mary, Mother mild,
 Maid and Mother undefiled,
 Save a Mother and her Child !

Now Who is he that bounds with joy
 On Carrock's side, a Shepherd-boy ?
 No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
 Light as the wind along the grass.
 Can this be He who hither came
 In secret, like a smothered flame ?
 O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
 For shelter, and a poor man's bread !
 God loves the Child ; and God hath willed
 That those dear words should be fulfilled,
 The Lady's words, when forced away,
 The last she to her Babe did say :
 ' My own, my own, thy Fellow-guest
 I may not be ; but rest thee, rest,
 For lowly shepherd's life is best ! '

Alas ! when evil men are strong
 No life is good, no pleasure long,
 The Boy must part from Mosedale's groves,
 And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
 And quit the flowers that summer brings
 To Glenderamakin's lofty springs ;
 Must vanish, and his careless cheer
 Be turned to heaviness and fear.
 —Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise !
 Hear it, good man, old in days !
 Thou tree of covert and of rest
 For this young Bird that is distrest ;
 Among thy branches safe he lay,

Song at Feast of Brougham Castle 229

And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.
A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear !
I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long,
A weak and cowardly untruth !
Our Clifford was a happy Youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.
—Again he wanders forth at will,
And tends a flock from hill to hill :
His garb is humble ; ne'er was seen
Such garb with such a noble mien ;
Among the shepherd grooms no mate
Hath he, a Child of strength and state :
Yet lacks not friends for simple glee,
Nor yet for higher sympathy.
To his side the fallow-deer
Came, and rested without fear ;
The eagle, lord of land and sea,
Stooped down to pay him fealty ;
And both the undying fish that swim
Through Bowscale-tarn did wait on him ;
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality ;
And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
Moved to and fro, for his delight.
He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
Upon the mountains visitant ;
He hath kenned them taking wing :
And into caves where Faeries sing
He hath entered ; and been told
By Voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
The face of thing that is to be ;
And, if that men report him right,
His tongue could whisper words of might.
—Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom ;
He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book ;
Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls ;—
' Quell the Scot,' exclaims the Lance—

Bear me to the heart of France,
 Is the longing of the Shield—
 Tell thy name, thou trembling Field ;
 Field of death, where'er thou be,
 Groan thou with our victory !
 Happy day, and mighty hour,
 When our Shepherd, in his power,
 Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword,
 To his ancestors restored
 Like a re-appearing Star,
 Like a glory from afar,
 First shall head the flock of war ! ”

Alas ! the impassioned minstrel did not know
 How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's heart was framed,
 How he, long forced in humble walks to go,
 Was softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed.

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie ;
 His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
 The silence that is in the starry sky,
 The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the Race,
 Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead :
 Nor did he change ; but kept in lofty place
 The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth ;
 The Shepherd-lord was honoured more and more ;
 And, ages after he was laid in earth,
 “ The good Lord Clifford ” was the name he bore.
 (1807)

THE FORCE OF PRAYER

OR

THE FOUNDING OF BOLTON PRIORY

A TRADITION¹

is good for a bootless knee ? ”

With these dark words begins my Tale ;
 And their meaning is, whence can comfort spring
 When Prayer is of no avail ?

¹ The story is preserved in Dr. Whitaker's *History of Craven*—a topographical writer of first-rate merit in all that concerns the past.

... is good for a bootless bene ? ”
 The Falconer to the Lady said ;
 And she made answer “ ENDLESS SORROW ! ”
 For she knew that her Son was dead.

She knew it by the Falconer's words,
 And from the look of the Falconer's eye ;
 And from the love which was in her soul
 For her youthful Romilly.

—Young Romilly through Barden woods
 Is ranging high and low ;
 And holds a greyhound in a leash,
 To let slip upon buck or doe.

The pair have reached that fearful chasm,
 How tempting to bestride !
 For lordly Wharf is there pent in
 With rocks on either side.

This striding-place is called THE STRID,
 A name which it took of yore :
 A thousand years hath it borne that name,
 And shall a thousand more.

And hither is young Romilly come,
 And what may now forbid
 That he, perhaps for the hundredth time,
 Shall bound across THE STRID ?

He sprang in glee,—for what cared he
 That the river was strong, and the rocks were steep ?—
 But the greyhound in the leash hung back,
 And checked him in his leap.

The Boy is in the arms of Wharf,
 And strangled by a merciless force ;
 For never more was young Romilly seen
 Till he rose a lifeless corse.

Now there is stillness in the vale
 And long, unspeaking sorrow :
 Wharf shall be to pitying hearts
 A name more sad than Yarrow.

If for a lover the Lady wept,
 A solace she might borrow
 From death, and from the passion of death ;—
 Old Wharf might heal her sorrow.

232 The Convention of Cintra

She weeps not for the wedding-day
 Which was to be to-morrow ;
 Her hope was a further-looking hope,
 And hers is a mother's sorrow.
 He was a tree that stood alone,
 And proudly did its branches wave ;
 And the root of this delightful tree
 Was in her husband's grave !
 Long, long in darkness did she sit,
 And her first words were, " Let there be
 In Bolton, on the field of Wharf,
 A stately Priory !"

The stately Priory was reared ;
 And Wharf, as he moved along,
 To matins joined a mournful voice,
 Nor failed at evensong.
 And the Lady prayed in heaviness
 That looked not for relief !
 But slowly did her succour come,
 And a patience to her grief.
 Oh ! there is never sorrow of heart
 That shall lack a timely end,
 If but to God we turn, and ask
 Of Him to be our friend !

(1807)

COMPOSED WHILE THE AUTHOR WAS ENGAGED IN WRITING A TRACT OCCASIONED BY THE CONVENTION OF CINTRA

Nor 'mid the world's vain objects that enslave
 The free-born Soul—that World whose vaunted skill
 In selfish interest perverts the will,
 Whose factions lead astray the wise and brave—
 Not there ; but in dark wood and rocky cave,
 And hollow vale which foaming torrents fill
 With omnipresent murmur as they rave
 Down their steep beds, that never shall be still :
 Here, mighty Nature ! in this school sublime
 I weigh the hopes and fears of suffering Spain ;
 For her consult the auguries of time,
 And through the human heart explore my way ;
 And look and listen—gathering, whence I may,
 Triumph, and thoughts no bondage can restrain.

(1808)

COMPOSED AT THE SAME TIME AND ON THE
SAME OCCASION

I DROPPED my pen ; and listened to the Wind
 That sang of trees upturned and vessels tost—
 A midnight harmony ; and wholly lost
 To the general sense of men by chains confined
 Of business, care, or pleasure ; or resigned
 To timely sleep. Thought I, the impassioned strain,
 Which, without aid of numbers, I sustain,
 Like acceptance from the World will find.
 Yet some with apprehensive ear shall drink
 A dirge devoutly breathed o'er sorrows past ;
 And to the attendant promise will give heed—
 The prophecy,—like that of this wild blast,
 Which, while it makes the heart with sadness shrink,
 Tells also of bright calms that shall succeed.

GEORGE AND SARAH GREEN¹

Who weeps for strangers? Many wept
 For George and Sarah Green ;
 Wept for that pair's unhappy fate,
 Whose grave may here be seen.
 By night, upon these stormy fells,
 Did wife and husband roam ;
 Six little ones at home had left,
 And could not find that home.
 For *any* dwelling-place of man
 As vainly did they seek.
 He perish'd ; and a voice was heard—
 The widow's lonely shriek.
 Not many steps, and she was left
 A body without life—
 A few short steps were the chain that bound
 The husband to the wife.
 Now do those sternly-featured hills
 Look gently on this grave ;
 And quiet now are the depths of air,
 As a sea without a wave.

¹ Wordsworth never included this poem in his works. The story is told impressively by De Quincey in his "Lake Reminiscences."

But deeper lies the heart of peace
 In quiet more profound ;
 The heart of quietness is here
 Within this churchyard bound
 And from all agony of mind
 It keeps them safe, and far
 From fear and grief, and from all need
 Of sun or guiding star.
 O darkness of the grave ! how deep,
 After that living night—
 That last and dreary living one
 Of sorrow and affright !
 O sacred marriage-bed of death,
 That keeps them side by side
 In bond of peace, in bond of love,
 That may not be untied !

(1808)

HOFFER

OF mortal parents is the Hero born
 By whom the undaunted Tyrolese are led ?
 Or is it Tell's great Spirit, from the dead,
 Returned to animate an age forlorn ?
 He comes like Phœbus through the gates of morn
 When dreary darkness is discomfited,
 Yet mark his modest state ! upon his head,
 That simple crest, a heron's plume, is worn.
 O Liberty ! they stagger at the shock
 From van to rear—and with one mind would flee,
 But half their host is buried :—rock on rock
 Descends !—beneath this godlike Warrior, see !
 Hills, torrents, woods, embodied to bemock
 The Tyrant, and confound his cruelty.

(1809)

“ADVANCE—COME FORTH FROM THY
 TYROLEAN GROUND ”

ADVANCE—come forth from thy Tyrolean ground,
 Dear Liberty ! stern Nymph of soul untamed ;
 Sweet Nymph, O rightly of the mountains named !
 Through the long chain of Alps from mound to mound
 And o'er the eternal snows, like Echo, bound ;
 Like Echo, when the hunter train at dawn
 Have roused her from her sleep : and forest-lawn,
 Cliffs, woods and caves, her viewless steps resound

And babble of her pastime !—On, dread Power !
With such invisible motion speed thy flight,
Through hanging clouds, from craggy height to height,
Through the green vales and through the herdsman's bower—
That all the Alps may gladden in thy might,
Here, there, and in all places at one hour.

FEELINGS OF THE TYROLESE

THE Land we from our fathers had in trust,
And to our children will transmit, or die :
This is our maxim, this our piety ;
And God and Nature say that it is just.
That which we *would* perform in arms—we must !
We read the dictate in the infant's eye ;
In the wife's smile ; and in the placid sky ;
And, at our feet, amid the silent dust
Of them that were before us.—Sing aloud
Old songs, the precious music of the heart !
Give, herds and flocks, your voices to the wind !
While we go forth, a self-devoted crowd,
With weapons grasped in fearless hands, to assert
Our virtue, and to vindicate mankind.

"ALAS! WHAT BOOTS THE LONG LABORIOUS QUEST"

ALAS ! what boots the long laborious quest
Of moral prudense, sought through good and ill ;
Or pains abstruse—to elevate the will,
And lead us on to that transcendent rest
Where every passion shall the sway attest
Of Reason, seated on her sovereign hill ;
What is it but a vain and curious skill,
If sapient Germany must lie deprest,
Beneath the brutal sword ?—Her haughty Schools
Shall blush ; and may not we with sorrow say—
A few strong instincts and a few plain rules,
Among the herdsmen of the Alps, have wrought
More for mankind at this unhappy day
Than all the pride of intellect and thought ?

"AND IS IT AMONG RUDE UNTUTORED
DALES"

AND is it among rude untutored Dales,
There, and there only, that the heart is true?
And, rising to repel or to subdue,
Is it by rocks and woods that man prevails?
Ah no! though Nature's dread protection fails,
There is a bulwark in the soul. This knew
Iberian Burghers when the sword they drew
In Zaragoza, naked to the gales
Of fiercely-breathing war. The truth was felt
By Palafox, and many a brave compeer,
Like him of noble birth and noble mind;
By ladies, meek-eyed women without fear;
And wanderers of the street, to whom is dealt
The bread which without industry they find.
(1809)

"O'ER THE WIDE EARTH, ON MOUNTAIN
AND ON PLAIN"

O'ER the wide earth, on mountain and on plain,
Dwells in the affections and the soul of man
A Godhead, like the universal PAN;
But more exalted, with a brighter train:
And shall his bounty be dispensed in vain,
Showered equally on city and on field,
And neither hope nor steadfast promise yield
In these usurping times of fear and pain?
Such doom awaits us. Nay, forbid it Heaven!
We know the arduous strife, the eternal laws
To which the triumph of all good is given,
High sacrifice, and labour without pause,
Even to the death:—else wherefore should the eye
Of man converse with immortality?
(1809)

ON THE FINAL SUBMISSION OF THE
TYROLESE

It was a *moral* end for which they fought;
Else how, when mighty Thrones were put to shame,
Could they, poor Shepherds, have preserved an aim,
A resolution, or enlivening thought?

Nor hath that moral good been *vainly* sought ;
For in their magnanimity and fame
Powers have they left, an impulse, and a claim
Which neither can be overturned nor bought.
Sleep, Warriors, sleep ! among your hills repose !
We know that ye, beneath the stern control
Of awful prudence, keep the unvanquished soul :
And when, impatient of her guilt and woes,
Europe breaks forth ; then, Shepherds ! shall ye rise
For perfect triumph o’er your Enemies.

(1809)

“HAIL, ZARAGOZA ! IF WITH UNWET EYE”

HAIL, Zaragoza ! If with unwet eye
We can approach, thy sorrow to behold,
Yet is the heart not pitiless nor cold ;
Such spectacle demands not tear or sigh.
These desolate remains are trophies high
Of more than martial courage in the breast
Of peaceful civic virtue : they attest
Thy matchless worth to all posterity.
Blood flowed before thy sight without remorse ;
Disease consumed thy vitals ; War upheaved
The ground beneath thee with volcanic force :
Dread trials ! yet encountered and sustained
Till not a wreck of help or hope remained,
And law was from necessity received.

(1809)

“SAY, WHAT IS HONOUR ?—”TIS THE FINEST
SENSE ”

SAY, what is Honour ?—’Tis the finest sense
Of *justice* which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence
Suffered or done. When lawless violence
Invades a Realm, so pressed that in the scale
Of perilous war her weightiest armies fail,
Honour is hopeful elevation,—whence
Glory, and triumph. Yet with politic skill
Endangered States may yield to terms unjust ;
Stoop their proud heads, but not unto the dust—
A Foe’s most favourite purpose to fulfil :
Happy occasions oft by self-mistrust
Are forfeited ; but infamy doth kill.

(1809)

238 'Brave Schill ! by Death delivered'

"THE MARTIAL COURAGE OF A DAY IS
VAIN "

THE martial courage of a day is vain,
An empty noise of death the battle's roar,
If vital hope be wanting to restore,
Or fortitude be wanting to sustain,
Armies or kingdoms. We have heard a strain
Of triumph, how the labouring Danube bore
A weight of hostile corpses ; drenched with gore
Were the wide fields, the hamlets heaped with slain.
Yet see (the mighty tumult overpast)
Austria a daughter of her Throne hath sold !
And her Tyrolean Champion we behold
Murdered, like one ashore by shipwreck cast,
Murdered without relief. Oh ! blind as bold,
To think that such assurance can stand fast !
(1809)

"BRAVE SCHILL ! BY DEATH DELIVERED "

BRAVE Schill ! by death delivered, take thy flight
From Prussia's timid region. Go, and rest
With heroes, 'mid the islands of the Blest,
Or in the fields of empyrean light.
A meteor wert thou crossing a dark night :
Yet shall thy name, conspicuous and sublime,
Stand in the spacious firmament of time,
Fixed as a star : such glory is thy right.
Alas ! it may not be : for earthly fame
Is Fortune's frail dependant ; yet there lives
A Judge, who, as man claims by merit, gives ;
To whose all-pondering mind a noble aim,
Faithfully kept, is as a noble deed ;
In whose pure sight all virtue doth succeed.
(1809)

"CALL NOT THE ROYAL SWEDE
UNFORTUNATE "

CALL not the royal Swede unfortunate,
Who never did to Fortune bend the knee ;
Who slighted fear ; rejected steadfastly
Temptation ; and whose kingly name and state
Have "perished by his choice, and not his fate !"
Hence lives He, to his inner self endeared ;

‘Look now on that Adventurer’ 239

And hence, wherever virtue is revered,
He sits a more exalted Potentate,
Throned in the hearts of men. Should Heaven ordain
That this great Servant of a righteous cause
Must still have sad or vexing thoughts to endure,
Yet may a sympathising spirit pause,
Admonished by these truths, and quench all pain
In thankful joy and gratulation pure.

(1809)

“LOOK NOW ON THAT ADVENTURER WHO
HATH PAID ”

Look now on that Adventurer who hath paid
His vows to Fortune ; who, in cruel slight
Of virtuous hope, of liberty, and right,
Hath followed wheresoe’er a way was made
By the blind Goddess,—ruthless, undismayed ;
And so hath gained at length a prosperous height,
Round which the elements of worldly might
Beneath his haughty feet, like clouds, are laid.
O joyless power that stands by lawless force !
Curses are *his* dire portion, scorn, and hate,
Internal darkness and unquiet breath ;
And, if old judgments keep their sacred course,
Him from that height shall Heaven precipitate
By violent and ignominious death.

1809]

“IS THERE A POWER THAT CAN SUSTAIN
AND CHEER ”

Is there a power that can sustain and cheer
The captive chieftain, by a tyrant’s doom,
Forced to descend into his destined tomb—
A dungeon dark ! where he must waste the year,
And lie cut off from all his heart holds dear
What time his injured country is a stage
Whereon deliberate Valour and the rage
Of righteous Vengeance side by side appear,
Filling from morn to night the heroic scene
With deeds of hope and everlasting praise :—
Say can he think of this with mind serene
And silent fetters ? Yes, if visions bright
Shine on his soul, reflected from the days
When he himself was tried in open light.

240 'In due Observance of Ancient Rite'

"AH! WHERE IS PALAFOX? NOR TONGUE
NOR PEN"

AH! where is Palafox? Nor tongue nor pen
Reports of him, his dwelling or his grave!
Does yet the unheard-of vessel ride the wave?
Or is she swallowed up, remote from ken
Of pitying human nature? Once again
Methinks that we shall hail thee, Champion brave,
Redeemed to baffle that imperial Slave,
And through all Europe cheer desponding men
With new-born hope. Unbounded is the might
Of martyrdom, and fortitude, and right.
Hark, how thy Country triumphs!—Smilingly
The Eternal looks upon her sword that gleams,
Like his own lightning, over mountains high,
On rampart, and the banks of all her streams.
(1810)

"IN DUE OBSERVANCE OF AN ANCIENT
RITE"

IN due observance of an ancient rite,
The rude Biscayans, when their children lie
Dead in the sinless time of infancy,
Attire the peaceful corse in vestments white;
And, in like sign of cloudless triumph bright,
They bind the unoffending creature's brows
With happy garlands of the pure white rose:
Then do a festal company unite
In choral song; and, while the uplifted cross
Of Jesus goes before, the child is borne
Uncovered to his grave: 'tis closed,—her loss
The Mother *then* mourns, as she needs must mourn;
But soon, through Christian faith, is grief subdued;
And joy returns, to brighten fortitude.
(1810)

FEELINGS OF A NOBLE BISCAYAN AT ONE
OF THOSE FUNERALS

YET, yet, Biscayans! we must meet our Foes
With firmer soul, yet labour to regain
Our ancient freedom; else 'twere worse than vain
To gather round the bier these festal shows.

A garland fashioned of the pure white rose
Becomes not one whose father is a slave :
Oh, bear the infant covered to his grave !
These venerable mountains now enclose
A people sunk in apathy and fear.
If this endure, farewell, for us, all good !
The awful light of heavenly innocence
Will fail to illuminate the infant's bier ;
And guilt and shame, from which is no defence,
Descend on all that issues from our blood.

(1810)

ON A CELEBRATED EVENT IN ANCIENT
HISTORY

I

A ROMAN Master stands on Grecian ground,
And to the people at the Isthmian Games
Assembled, He, by a herald's voice, proclaims
THE LIBERTY OF GREECE :—the words rebound
Until all voices in one voice are drowned ;
Glad acclamation by which air was rent !
And birds, high-flying in the element,
Dropped to the earth, astonished at the sound !
Yet were the thoughtful grieved ; and still that voice
Haunts, with sad echoes, musing Fancy's ear :
Ah ! that a *Conqueror's* words should be so dear :
Ah ! that a *boon* could shed such rapturous joys !
A gift of that which is not to be given
By all the blended powers of Earth and Heaven.

II

WHEN, far and wide, swift as the beams of morn
The tidings past of servitude repealed,
And of that joy which shook the Isthmian Field,
The rough Ætolians smiled with bitter scorn.
" 'Tis known," cried they, " that he, who would adorn
His envied temples with the Isthmian crown,
Must either win, through effort of his own,
The prize, or be content to see it worn
By more deserving brows.—Yet so ye prop,
Sons of the brave who fought at Marathon,
Your feeble spirits ! Greece her head hath bowed,
As if the wreath of liberty thereon
Would fix itself as smoothly as a cloud,
Which, at Jove's will, descends on Pelion's top."

(1810)

THE OAK OF GUERNICA¹

OAK of Guernica! Tree of holier power
 Than that which in Dodona did enshrine
 (So faith too fondly deemed) a voice divine
 Heard from the depths of its aerial bower—
 How canst thou flourish at this blighting hour?
 What hope, what joy can sunshine bring to thee,
 Or the soft breezes from the Atlantic sea,
 The dews of morn, or April's tender shower?
 Stroke merciful and welcome would that be
 Which should extend thy branches on the ground,
 If never more within their shady round
 Those lofty-minded Lawgivers shall meet,
 Peasant and lord, in their appointed seat,
 Guardians of Biscay's ancient liberty
 (1810)

INDIGNATION OF A HIGH-MINDED
SPANIARD

WE can endure that He should waste our lands,
 Despoil our temples, and by sword and flame
 Return us to the dust from which we came;
 Such food a Tyrant's appetite demands:
 And we can brook the thought that by his hands
 Spain may be overpowered, and he possess,
 For his delight, a solemn wilderness
 Where all the brave lie dead. But, when of bands
 Which he will break for us he dares to speak,
 Of benefits, and of a future day
 When our enlightened minds shall bless his sway;
Then, the strained heart of fortitude proves weak;
 Our groans, our blushes, our pale cheeks declare
 That he has power to inflict what we lack strength to bear.
 (1810)

"AVAUNT ALL SPECIOUS PLIANCY OF MIND"

AVAUNT all specious pliancy of mind
 In men of low degree, all smooth pretence!
 I better like a blunt indifference,

¹ The ancient oak of Guernica, says Laborde in his account of Biscay, is a most venerable natural monument. Ferdinand and Isabella, in the year 1476, after hearing mass in the church of Santa Maria de la Antigua, repaired to this tree, under which they swore to the Biscayans to maintain their *fueros* (privileges).

And self-respecting slowness, disinclined
To win me at first sight : and be there joined
Patience and temperance with this high reserve,
Honour that knows the path and will not swerve ;
Affections, which, if put to proof, are kind ;
And piety towards God. Such men of old
Were England’s native growth ; and, throughout Spain
(Thanks to high God) forests of such remain :
Then for that Country let our hopes be bold ;
For matched with these shall policy prove vain,
Her arts, her strength, her iron, and her gold.

(1810)

“O’ERWEENING STATESMEN HAVE FULL
LONG RELIED”

O’ERWEENING Statesmen have full long relied
On fleets and armies, and external wealth :
But from *within* proceeds a Nation’s health ;
Which shall not fail, though poor men cleave with pride
To the paternal floor ; or turn aside,
In the thronged city, from the walks of gain,
As being all unworthy to detain
A Soul by contemplation sanctified.
There are who cannot languish in this strife,
Spaniards of every rank, by whom the good
Of such high course was felt and understood ;
Who to their Country’s cause have bound a life
Erewhile, by solemn consecration, given
To labour and to prayer, to nature, and to heaven.¹

(1810)

THE FRENCH AND THE SPANISH GUERRILLAS

HUNGER, and sultry heat, and nipping blast
From bleak hill-top, and length of march by night
Through heavy swamp, or over snow-clad height—
These hardships ill-sustained, these dangers past,
The roving Spanish Bands are reached at last,
Charged, and dispersed like foam : but as a flight
Of scattered quails by signs do reunite,
So these,—and, heard of once again, are chased
With combinations of long-practised art
And newly-kindled hope ; but they are fled—
Gone are they, viewless as the buried dead :

¹ See Laborde’s character of the Spanish people ; from him the sentiment of these last two lines is taken.

Where now?—Their sword is at the Foeman's heart;
 And thus from year to year his walk they thwart,
 And hang like dreams around his guilty bed.
 (1810)

SPANISH GUERILLAS

THEY seek, are sought; to daily battle led,
 Shrink not, though far outnumbered by their Foes,
 For they have learnt to open and to close
 The ridges of grim war; and at their head
 Are captains such as erst their country bred
 Or fostered, self-supported chiefs,—like those
 Whom hardy Rome was fearful to oppose;
 Whose desperate shock the Carthaginian fled.
 In One who lived unknown a shepherd's life
 Redoubted Viriatus breathes again;
 And Mina, nourished in the studious shade,
 With that great Leader¹ vies, who, sick of strife
 And bloodshed, longed in quiet to be laid
 In some green island of the western main.
 (1811)

“THE POWER OF ARMIES IS A VISIBLE
 THING”

THE power of Armies is a visible thing,
 Formal, and circumscribed in time and space;
 But who the limits of that power shall trace
 Which a brave People into light can bring
 Or hide, at will,—for freedom combating
 By just revenge inflamed? No foot may chase,
 No eye can follow, to a fatal place
 That power, that spirit, whether on the wing
 Like the strong wind, or sleeping like the wind
 Within its awful caves.—From year to year
 Springs this indigenous produce far and near;
 No craft this subtle element can bind,
 Rising like water from the soil, to find
 In every nook a lip that it may cheer.
 (1811)

“HERE PAUSE: THE POET CLAIMS AT
 LEAST THIS PRAISE”

HERE pause: the poet claims at least this praise,
 That virtuous Liberty hath been the scope

¹ Sertorius.

Of his pure song, which did not shrink from hope
 In the worst moment of these evil days ;
 From hope, the paramount *duty* that Heaven lays,
 For its own honour, on man's suffering heart.
 Never may from our souls one truth depart—
 That an accursed thing it is to gaze
 On prosperous tyrants with a dazzled eye ;
 Nor—touched with due abhorrence of *their* guilt
 For whose dire ends tears flow, and blood is spilt,
 And justice labours in extremity—
 Forget thy weakness, upon which is built,
 O wretched man, the throne of tyranny !
 (1811)

EPITAPHS

1810

TRANSLATED FROM CHIABRERA ¹

I

WEEP not, belovèd Friends ! nor let the air
 For me with sighs be troubled. Not from life
 Have I been taken ; this is genuine life
 And this alone—the life which now I live
 In peace eternal ; where desire and joy
 Together move in fellowship without end.—
 Francesco Ceni willed that, after death,
 His tombstone thus should speak for him. And surely
 Small cause there is for that fond wish of ours
 Long to continue in this world ; a world
 That keeps not faith, nor yet can point a hope
 To good, whereof itself is destitute.

II

PERHAPS some needful service of the State
 Drew TITUS from the depth of studious bowers,
 And doomed him to contend in faithless courts,
 Where gold determines between right and wrong.
 Yet did at length his loyalty of heart,
 And his pure native genius, lead him back
 To wait upon the bright and gracious Muses,
 Whom he had early loved. And not in vain
 Such course he held ! Bologna's learned schools

¹ Chiefly translated when Mr. Coleridge was writing his "*Friend*," in which periodical my "Essay on Epitaphs," written about that time, was first published. For further notice of Chiabrera, in connection with his Epitaphs, see "Musings at Aquapendente."

Were gladdened by the Sage's voice, and hung
 With fondness on those sweet Nestorian strains.
 There pleasure crowned his days ; and all his thoughts
 A roseate fragrance breathed.¹—O human life,
 That never art secure from dolorous change !
 Behold a high injunction suddenly
 To Arno's side hath brought him, and he charmed
 A Tuscan audience : but full soon was called
 To the perpetual silence of the grave.
 Mourn, Italy, the loss of him who stood
 A Champion steadfast and invincible,
 To quell the rage of literary War !

III

O THOU who movest onward with a mind
 Intent upon thy way, pause, though in haste !
 'Twill be no fruitless moment. I was born
 Within Savona's walls, of gentle blood.
 On Tiber's banks my youth was dedicate
 To sacred studies ; and the Roman Shepherd
 Gave to my charge Urbino's numerous flock.
 Well did I watch, much laboured, nor had power
 To escape from many and strange indignities ;
 Was smitten by the great ones of the world,
 But did not fall ; for Virtue braves all shocks,
 Upon herself resting immoveably.
 Me did a kindlier fortune then invite
 To serve the glorious Henry, King of France,
 And in his hands I saw a high reward
 Stretched out for my acceptance,—but Death came.
 Now, Reader, learn from this my fate, how false,
 How treacherous to her promise, is the world ;
 And trust in God—to whose eternal doom
 Must bend the sceptred Potentates of earth.

IV

THERE never breathed a man who, when his life
 Was closing, might not of that life relate
 Toils long and hard.—The warrior will report
 Of wounds, and bright swords flashing in the field,
 And blast of trumpets. He who hath been doomed
 To bow his forehead in the courts of kings,
 Will tell of fraud and never-ceasing hate,

¹ Ivi vivea giocondo ei suoi pensieri
 Erano tutti rose.

The Translator had not skill to come nearer to his original.

Envy and heart-inquietude, derived
 From intricate cabals of treacherous friends.
 I, who on shipboard lived from earliest youth,
 Could represent the countenance horrible
 Of the vexed waters, and the indignant rage
 Of Auster and Boötes. Fifty years
 Over the well-steered galleys did I rule :—
 From huge Pelorus to the Atlantic pillars,
 Rises no mountain to mine eyes unknown ;
 And the broad gulfs I traversed oft and oft :
 Of every cloud which in the heavens might stir
 I knew the force ; and hence the rough sea's pride
 Availed not to my Vessel's overthrow.
 What noble pomp and frequent have not I
 On regal decks beheld ! yet in the end
 I learned that one poor moment can suffice
 To equalise the lofty and the low.
 We sail the sea of life—a *Calm* One finds,
 And One a *Tempest*—and, the voyage o'er,
 Death is the quiet haven of us all.
 If more of my condition ye would know,
 Savona was my birth-place, and I sprang
 Of noble parents ; seventy years and three
 Lived I—then yielded to a slow disease.

v

TRUE is it that Ambrosio Salinero
 With an untoward fate was long involved
 In odious litigation ; and full long,
 Fate harder still ! had he to endure assaults
 Of racking malady. And true it is
 That not the less a frank courageous heart
 And buoyant spirit triumphed over pain ;
 And he was strong to follow in the steps
 Of the fair Muses. Not a covert path
 Leads to the dear Parnassian forest's shade,
 That might from him be hidden ; not a track
 Mounts to pellucid Hippocrene, but he
 Had traced its windings.—This Savona knows,
 Yet no sepulchral honours to her Son
 She paid, for in our age the heart is ruled
 Only by gold. And now a simple stone
 Inscribed with this memorial here is raised
 By his bereft, his lonely, Chiabrera.
 Think not, O Passenger ! who read'st the lines,

That an exceeding love hath dazzled me ;
 No—he was One whose memory ought to spread
 Where'er Permessus bears an honoured name,
 And live as long as its pure stream shall flow.

VI

DESTINED to war from very infancy
 Was I, Roberto Dati, and I took
 In Malta the white symbol of the Cross :
 Nor in life's vigorous season did I shun
 Hazard or toil ; among the sands was seen
 Of Libya ; and not seldom, on the banks
 Of wide Hungarian Danube, 'twas my lot
 To hear the sanguinary trumpet sounded.
 So lived I, and repined not at such fate .
 This only grieves me, for it seems a wrong,
 That stripped of arms I to my end am brough
 On the soft down of my paternal home.
 Yet haply Arno shall be spared all cause
 To blush for me. Thou, loiter not nor halt
 In thy appointed way, and bear in mind
 How fleeting and how frail is human life !

VII

O FLOWER of all that springs from gentle blood,
 And all that generous nurture breeds to make
 Youth amiable ; O friend so true of soul
 To fair Aglaia ; by what envy moved,
 Lelius ! has death cut short thy brilliant day
 In its sweet opening ? and what dire mishap
 Has from Savona torn her best delight ?
 For thee she mourns, nor e'er will cease to mourn ;
 And, should the out-pourings of her eyes suffice not
 For her heart's grief, she will entreat Sebeto
 Not to withhold his bounteous aid, Sebeto
 Who saw thee, on his margin, yield to death,
 In the chaste arms of thy beloved Love !
 What profit riches ? what does youth avail !
 Dust are our hopes ;—I, weeping bitterly,
 Penned these sad lines, nor can forbear to pray
 That every gentle Spirit hither led
 May read them, not without some bitter tears.

VIII

NOT without heavy grief of heart did He
 On whom the duty fell (for at that time

The father sojourned in a distant land)
 Deposit in the hollow of this tomb
 A brother's Child, most tenderly beloved !
 FRANCESCO was the name the Youth had borne,
 POZZOBONNELLI his illustrious house ;
 And, when beneath this stone the Corse was laid,
 The eyes of all Savona streamed with tears.
 Alas ! the twentieth April of his life
 Had scarcely flowered : and at this early time,
 By genuine virtue he inspired a hope
 That greatly cheered his country : to his kin
 He promised comfort ; and the flattering thoughts
 His friends had in their fondness entertained,¹
 He suffered not to languish or decay.
 Now is there not good reason to break forth
 Into a passionate lament ?— O Soul !
 Short while a Pilgrim in our nether world,
 Do thou enjoy the calm empyreal air ;
 And round this earthly tomb let roses rise,
 An everlasting spring ! in memory
 Of that delightful fragrance which was once
 From thy mild manners quietly exhaled.

IX

PAUSE, courteous Spirit !—Balbi supplicates
 That Thou, with no reluctant voice, for him
 Here laid in mortal darkness, wouldst prefer
 A prayer to the Redeemer of the world.
 This to the dead by sacred right belongs ;
 All else is nothing.—Did occasion suit
 To tell his worth, the marble of this tomb
 Would ill suffice : for Plato's lore sublime,
 And all the wisdom of the Stagyrte,
 Enriched and beautified his studious mind :
 With Archimedes also he conversed
 As with a chosen friend ; nor did he leave
 Those laureat wreaths ungathered which the Nymphs
 Twine near their loved Permessus.—Finally,
 Himself above each lower thought uplifting,
 His ears he closed to listen to the songs
 Which Sion's Kings did consecrate of old ;
 And his Permessus found on Lebanon.

¹ In justice to the Author, I subjoin the original :—

———— e degli amici
 Non lasciava languire i bei pensieri.

A blessèd Man ! who of protracted days
 Made not, as thousands do, a vulgar sleep ;
 But truly did *He* live his life. Urbino,
 Take pride in him !—O Passenger, farewell !

MATERNAL GRIEF¹

DEPARTED Child ! I could forget thee once
 Though at my bosom nursed ; this woeful gain
 Thy dissolution brings, that in my soul
 Is present and perpetually abides
 A shadow, never, never to be displaced
 By the returning substance, seen or touched,
 Seen by mine eyes, or clasped in my embrace.
 Absence and death how differ they ! and how
 Shall I admit that nothing can restore
 What one short sigh so easily removed ?—
 Death, life, and sleep, reality and thought,
 Assist me, God, their boundaries to know,
 O teach me calm submission to thy Will !

The Child she mourned had overstepped the pale
 Of Infancy, but still did breathe the air
 That sanctifies its confines, and partook
 Reflected beams of that celestial light
 To all the Little-ones on sinful earth
 Not unvouchsafed—a light that warmed and cheered
 Those several qualities of heart and mind
 Which, in her own blest nature, rooted deep,
 Daily before the Mother's watchful eye,
 And not hers only, their peculiar charms
 Unfolded,—beauty, for its present self,
 And for its promises to future years,
 With not unfrequent rapture fondly hailed.

Have you espied upon a dewy lawn
 A pair of Leverets each provoking each
 To a continuance of their fearless sport,
 Two separate Creatures in their several gifts
 Abounding, but so fashioned that, in all
 That Nature prompts them to display, their looks,
 Their starts of motion and their fits of rest,
 An *undivided* style appears
 And *unity*, as if Spring
 Lodged in their innocent bosoms, and the spirit

¹ This was in part an overflow from the Solitary's description of his own and his wife's feelings upon the decease of their children. (See "Excursion," book III.)

Of the rejoicing morning were their own ?

Such union, in the lovely Girl maintained
And her twin Brother, had the parent seen
Ere, pouncing like a ravenous bird of prey,
Death in a moment parted them, and left
The Mother, in her turns of anguish, worse
Than desolate ; for oft-times from the sound
Of the survivor's sweetest voice (dear child,
He knew it not) and from his happiest looks,
Did she extract the food of self-reproach,
As one that lived ungrateful for the stay
By Heaven afforded to uphold her maimed
And tottering spirit. And full oft the Boy,
Now first acquainted with distress and grief,
Shrunk from his Mother's presence, shunned with fear
Her sad approach, and stole away to find,
In his known haunts of joy where'er he might,
A more congenial object. But, as time
Softened her pangs and reconciled the child
To what he saw, he gradually returned,
Like a scared Bird encouraged to renew
A broken intercourse ; and, while his eyes
Were yet with pensive fear and gentle awe
Turned upon her who bore him, she would stoop
To imprint a kiss that lacked not power to spread
Faint colour over both their pallid cheeks,
And stilled his tremulous lip. Thus they were calmed
And cheered ; and now together breathe fresh air
In open fields ; and when the glare of day
Is gone, and twilight to the Mother's wish
Befriends the observance, readily they join
In walks whose boundary is the lost One's grave,
Which he with flowers hath planted, finding there
Amusement, where the Mother does not miss
Dear consolation, kneeling on the turf
In prayer, yet blending with that solemn rite
Of pious faith the vanities of grief ;
For such, by pitying Angels and by Spirits
Transferred to regions upon which the clouds
Of our weak nature rest not, must be deemed
Those willing tears, and unforbidden sighs,
And all those tokens of a cherished sorrow.
Which, soothed and sweetened by the grace of Heaven
As now it is, seems to her own fond heart,
Immortal as the love that gave it being.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD THREE
YEARS OLD¹

LOVING she is, and tractable, though wild ;
 And Innocence hath privilege in her
 To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes ;
 And feats of cunning ; and the pretty round
 Of trespasses, affected to provoke
 Mock-chastisement and partnership in play.
 And, as a faggot sparkles on the hearth,
 Not less if unattended and alone
 Than when both young and old sit gathered round
 And take delight in its activity ;
 Even so this happy Creature of herself
 Is all-sufficient, solitude to her
 Is blithe society, who fills the air
 With gladness and involuntary songs.
 Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn's
 Forth-startled from the fern where she lay couched ;
 Unthought-of, unexpected, as the stir
 Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow-flowers,
 Or from before it chasing wantonly
 The many-coloured images imprest
 Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

(1811)

EPISTLE

TO SIR GEORGE HOWLAND BEAUMONT, BART.
 FROM THE SOUTH-WEST COAST OF CUMBERLAND²
 1811

FAR from our home by Grasmere's quiet Lake,
 From the Vale's peace which all her fields partake,
 Here on the bleakest point of Cumbria's shore
 We sojourn stunned by Ocean's ceaseless roar ;
 While, day by day, grim neighbour ! huge Black Comb
 Frowns deepening visibly his native gloom,
 Unless, perchance rejecting in despite
 What on the Plain *we* have of warmth and light,
 In his own storms he hides himself from sight.

¹ Written at Allanbank, Grasmere. Picture of my Daughter Catharine, who died the year after.

² This poem opened, when first written, with a paragraph that has been transferred as an introduction to the first series of my Scotch Memorials. The journey, of which the first part is here described, was from Grasmere to Bootle on the south-west coast of Cumberland, the whole among mountain roads through a beautiful country ; and we had fine weather.

Rough is the time ; and thoughts, that would be free
 From heaviness, oft fly, dear Friend, to thee ;
 Turn from a spot where neither sheltered road
 Nor hedge-row screen invites my steps abroad ;
 Where one poor Plane-tree, having as it might
 Attained a stature twice a tall man's height,
 Hopeless of further growth, and brown and sere
 Through half the summer, stands with top cut sheer,
 Like an unshifting weathercock which proves
 How cold the quarter that the wind best loves,
 Or like a Centinel that, evermore
 Darkening the window, ill defends the door
 Of this unfinished house—a Fortress bare,
 Where strength has been the Builder's only care ;
 Whose rugged walls may still for years demand
 The final polish of the Plasterer's hand.
 —This Dwelling's Inmate more than three weeks space
 And oft a Prisoner in the cheerless place,
 I—of whose touch the fiddle would complain,
 Whose breath would labour at the flute in vain,
 In music all unversed, nor blessed with skill
 A bridge to copy, or to paint a mill,
 Tired of my books, a scanty company !
 And tired of listening to the boisterous sea—
 Pace between door and window muttering rhyme,
 An old resource to cheat a froward time !
 Though these dull hours (mine is it, or their shame ?)
 Would tempt me to renounce that humble aim.
 —But if there be a Muse who, free to take
 Her seat upon Olympus, doth forsake
 Those heights (like Phœbus when his golden locks
 He veiled, attendant on Thessalian flocks)
 And, in disguise, a Milkmaid with her pail
 Trips down the pathways of some winding dale ;
 Or, like a Mermaid, warbles on the shores
 To fishers mending nets beside their doors ;
 Or, Pilgrim-like, on forest moss reclined,
 Gives plaintive ditties to the heedless wind,
 Or listens to its play among the boughs
 Above her head and so forgets her vows—
 If such a Visitant of Earth there be
 And she would deign this day to smile on me
 And aid my verse, content with local bounds
 Of natural beauty and life's daily rounds,
 Thoughts, chances, sights, or doings, which we tell

Without reserve to those whom we love well—
Then haply, Beaumont! words in current clear
Will flow, and on a welcome page appear
Duly before thy sight, unless they perish here.

What shall I treat of? News from Mona's Isle?
Such have we, but unvaried in its style;
No tales of Runagates fresh landed, whence
And wherefore fugitive or on what pretence;
Of feasts, or scandal, eddying like the wind
Most restlessly alive when most confined.
Ask not of me, whose tongue can best appease
The mighty tumults of the HOUSE OF KEYS;
The last year's cup whose Ram or Heifer gained,
What slopes are planted, or what mosses drained:
An eye of fancy only can I cast
On that proud pageant now at hand or past,
When full five hundred boats in trim array,
With nets and sails outspread and streamers gay,
And chanted hymns and stiller voice of prayer,
For the old Manx-harvest to the Deep repair,
Soon as the herring-shoals at distance shine
Like beds of moonlight shifting on the brine.

Mona from our Abode is daily seen,
But with a wilderness of waves between;
And by conjecture only can we speak
Of aught transacted there in bay or creek;
No tidings reach us thence from town or field,
Only faint news her mountain sunbeams yield,
And some we gather from the misty air,
And some the hovering clouds, our telegraph, declare.
But these poetic mysteries I withhold;
For Fancy hath her fits both hot and cold,
And should the colder fit with You be on
When You might read, my credit would be gone.

Let more substantial themes the pen engage,
And nearer interests culled from the opening stage
Of our migration.—Ere the welcome dawn
Had from the east her silver star withdrawn,
The Wain stood ready, at our Cottage-door,
Thoughtfully freighted with a various store;
And long or ere the uprising of the Sun
O'er dew-damped dust our journey was begun,
A needful journey, under favouring skies,
Through peopled Vales; yet something in the guise
Of those old Patriarchs when from well to well

They roamed 'through Wastes where now the tented Arabs dwell.

Say first, to whom did we the charge confide,
Who promptly undertook the Wain to guide
Up many a sharply-twining road and down,
And over many a wide hill's craggy crown,
Through the quick turns of many a hollow nook,
And the rough bed of many an unbridged brook?
A blooming Lass—who in her better hand
Bore a light switch, her sceptre of command
When, yet a slender Girl, she often led,
Skilful and bold, the horse and burthened *sled*¹
From the peat-yielding Moss on Gowdar's head.
What could go wrong with such a Charioteer
For goods and chattels, or those Infants dear,
A Pair who smilingly sate side by side,
Our hope confirming that the salt-sea tide
Whose free embraces we were bound to seek,
Would their lost strength restore and freshen the pale cheek?
Such hope did either Parent entertain
Pacing behind along the silent lane.

Blithe hopes and happy musings soon took flight,
For lo! an uncouth melancholy sight—
On a green bank a creature stood forlorn
Just half protruded to the light of morn,
Its hinder part concealed by hedge-row thorn
The Figure called to mind a beast of prey
Stript of its frightful powers by slow decay,
And, though no longer upon rapine bent,
Dim memory keeping of its old intent.
We started, looked again with anxious eyes,
And in that griesly object recognise
The Curate's Dog—his long-tried friend, for they,
As well we knew, together had grown grey.
The Master died, his drooping servant's grief
Found at the Widow's feet some sad relief;
Yet still he lived in pining discontent,
Sadness which no indulgence could prevent;
Hence whole day wanderings, broken nightly sleeps
And lonesome watch that out of doors he keeps;
Not oftentimes, I trust, as we, poor brute!
Espied him on his legs sustained, blank, mute,
And of all visible motion destitute,
So that the very heaving of his breath

¹ A local word for Sledge.

Seemed stopt, though by some other power than death.
 Long as we gazed upon the form and face,
 A mild domestic pity kept its place,
 Unscared by thronging fancies of strange hue
 That haunted us in spite of what we knew.
 Even now I sometimes think of him as lost
 In second-sight appearances, or crost
 By spectral shapes of guilt, or to the ground,
 On which he stood, by spells unnatural bound,
 Like a gaunt shaggy Porter forced to wait
 In days of old romance at Archimago's gate.

Advancing Summer, Nature's law fulfilled,
 The choristers in every grove had stilled ;
 But we, we lacked not music of our own,
 For lightsome Fanny had thus early thrown,
 Mid the gay prattle of those infant tongues,
 Some notes prelusive, from the round of songs
 With which, more zealous than the liveliest bird
 That in wild Arden's brakes was ever heard,
 Her work and her work's partners she can cheer,
 The whole day long, and all days of the year.

Thus gladdened from our own dear Vale we pass
 And soon approach Diana's Looking-glass !
 To Loughrigg tarn,¹ round clear and bright as heaven,
 Such name Italian fancy would have given,
 Ere on its banks the few grey cabins rose
 That yet disturb not its concealed repose
 More than the feeblest wind that idly blows.

Ah, Beaumont ! when an opening in the road
 Stopped me at once by charm of what it showed,
 The encircling region vividly exprest
 Within the mirror's depth, a world at rest—
 Sky streaked with purple, grove and craggy *field*,²
 And the smooth green of many a pendent field,
 And, quieted and soothed, a torrent small,
 A little daring would-be waterfall,
 One chimney smoking and its azure wreath,
 Associate all in the calm Pool beneath,
 With here and there a faint imperfect gleam
 Of water-lilies veiled in misty steam—

LOUGHRIGG TARN resembles, though much smaller in compass, the Lake Nemi, or *Speculum Dianae* as it is often called, not only in its clear waters and circular form, and the beauty immediately surrounding it, but also as being overlooked by the eminence of Langdale Pikes as Lake Nemi is by that of Monte Calvo.

² A word common in the country, signifying shelter, as in Scotland.

What wonder at this hour of stillness deep,
A shadowy link 'tween wakefulness and sleep,
When Nature's self, amid such blending, seems
To render visible her own soft dreams,
If, mixed with what appeared of rock, lawn, wood,
Fondly embosomed in the tranquil flood,
A glimpse I caught of that Abode, by Thee
Designed to rise in humble privacy,
A lowly Dwelling, here to be outspread,
Like a small Hamlet, with its bashful head
Half hid in native trees. Alas 'tis not,
Nor ever was ; I sighed, and left the spot
Unconscious of its own untoward lot,
And thought in silence, with regret too keen,
Of unexperienced joys that might have been ;
Of neighbourhood and intermingling arts,
And golden summer days uniting cheerful hearts.
But time, irrevocable time, is flown.
And let us utter thanks for blessings sown
And reaped—what hath been, and what is, our own.

Not far we travelled ere a shout of glee,
Startling us all, dispersed my reverie ;
Such shout as many a sportive echo meeting
 Oft-times from Alpine *chalets* sends a greeting.
Whence the blithe hail ? behold a Peasant stand
On high, a kerchief waving in her hand !
Not unexpectant that by early day
Our little Band would thrid this mountain way,
Before her cottage on the bright hill side
She hath advanced with hope to be descried.
Right gladly answering signals we displayed,
Moving along a tract of morning shade,
And vocal wishes sent of like good will
To our kind Friend high on the sunny hill—
Luminous region, fair as if the prime
Were tempting all astir to look aloft or climb ;
Only the centre of the shining cot
With door left open makes a gloomy spot,
Emblem of those dark corners sometimes found
Within the happiest breast on earthly ground.

Rich prospect left behind of stream and vale,
And mountain-tops, a barren ridge we scale ;
Descend, and reach, in Yewdale's depths, a plain
With haycocks studded, striped with yellowing grain—
An area level as a Lake and spread

Under a rock too steep for man to tread,
Where sheltered from the north and bleak northwest
Aloft the Raven hangs a visible nest,
Fearless of all assaults that would her brood molest.
Hot sunbeams fill the steaming vale ; but hark,
At our approach, a jealous watch-dog's bark,
Noise that brings forth no liveried Page of state,
But the whole household, that our coming wait.
With Young and Old warm greetings we exchange,
And jocund smiles, and toward the lowly Grange
Press forward by the teasing dogs unscared.
Entering, we find the morning meal prepared :
So down we sit, though not till each had cast
Pleased looks around the delicate repast—
Rich cream, and snow-white eggs fresh from the nest,
With amber honey from the mountain's breast ;
Strawberries from lane or woodland, offering wild
Of children's industry, in hillocks piled ;
Cakes for the nonce, and butter fit to lie
Upon a lordly dish ; frank hospitality
Where simple art with bounteous nature vied,
And cottage comfort shunned not seemly pride.

Kind Hostess ! Handmaid also of the feast,
If thou be lovelier than the kindling East,
Words by thy presence unrestrained may speak
Of a perpetual dawn from brow and cheek
Instinct with light whose sweetest promise lies,
Never retiring, in thy large dark eyes,
Dark but to every gentle feeling true,
As if their lustre flowed from ether's purest blue.

Let me not ask what tears may have been wept
By those bright eyes, what weary vigils kept,
Beside that hearth what sighs may have been heaved
For wounds inflicted, nor what toil relieved
By fortitude and patience, and the grace
Of heaven in pity visiting the place.
Not unadvisedly those secret springs
I leave unsearched : enough that memory clings,
Here as elsewhere, to notices that make
Their own significance for hearts awake,
To rural incidents, whose genial powers
Filled with delight three summer morning hours.

More could my pen report of grave or gay
That through our gipsy travel cheered the way ;
But, bursting forth above the waves, the Sun

'The Sight of a Beautiful Picture' 259

Laughs at my pains, and seems to say "Be done."
Yet, Beaumont, thou wilt not, I trust, reprove
This humble offering made by Truth to Love,
Nor chide the Muse that stooped to break a spell
Which might have else been on me yet :—FAREWELL.
(1811)

UPON PERUSING THE FOREGOING EPISTLE THIRTY
YEARS AFTER ITS COMPOSITION

Soon did the Almighty Giver of all rest
Take those dear young Ones to a fearless nest ;
And in Death's arms has long reposed the Friend
For whom this simple Register was penned.
Thanks to the moth that spared it for our eyes ;
And Strangers even the slighted Scroll may prize,
Moved by the touch of kindred sympathies.
For—save the calm, repentance sheds o'er strife
Raised by remembrances of misused life,
The light from past endeavours purely willed
And by Heaven's favour happily fulfilled ;
Save hope that we, yet bound to Earth, may share
The joys of the Departed—what so fair
As blameless pleasure, not without some tears,
Reviewed through Love's transparent veil of years ?

UPON THE SIGHT OF A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE¹

PAINTED BY SIR G. H. BEAUMONT, BART.

PRaised be the Art whose subtle power could stay
Yon cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape ;
Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day ;
Which stopped that band of travellers on their way,
Ere they were lost within the shady wood ;
And showed the Bark upon the grassy flood
For ever anchored in her sheltering bay.
Soul-soothing Art ! whom Morning, Noontide, Even,
Do serve with all their changeful pageantry ;
Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast given
To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
The appropriate calm of blest eternity.

(1811)

¹ This was written when we dwelt in the Parsonage at Grasmere.
The principal features of the picture are Bredon Hill and Cloud Hill
near Coleorton. I shall never forget the happy feeling with which my
heart was filled when I was impelled to compose this Sonnet.

INSCRIPTIONS

IN THE GROUNDS OF COLEORTON, THE SEAT OF SIR
GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART., LEICESTERSHIRE

I

THE embowering rose, the acacia, and the pine,
Will not unwillingly their place resign ;
If but the Cedar thrive that near them stands,
Planted by Beaumont's and by Wordsworth's hands,
One wooed the silent Art with studious pains :
These groves have heard the Other's pensive strains ;
Devoted thus, their spirits did unite
By interchange of knowledge and delight.
May Nature's kindest powers sustain the Tree,
And Love protect it from all injury !
And when its potent branches, wide out-thrown,
Darken the brow of this memorial Stone,
Here may some Painter sit in future days,
Some future Poet meditate his lays ;
Not mindless of that distant age renowned
When Inspiration hovered o'er this ground,
The haunt of him who sang how spear and shield
In civil conflict met on Bosworth-field ;
And of that famous Youth, full soon removed
From earth, perhaps by Shakspeare's self approved,
Fletcher's Associate, Jonson's Friend beloved.

(1808)

II¹

OFt is the medal faithful to its trust
When temples, columns, towers, are laid in dust ;
And 'tis a common ordinance of fate
That things obscure and small outlive the great :
Hence, when yon mansion and the flowery trim
Of this fair garden, and its alleys dim,
And all its stately trees, are passed away,
This little Niche, unconscious of decay,
Perchance may still survive. And be it known
That it was scooped within the living stone,—

¹ This Niche is in the sandstone-rock in the winter-garden at Coleorton, which garden, as has been elsewhere said, was made under our direction out of an old unsightly quarry. While the labourers were at work, Mrs. Wordsworth, my Sister, and I used to amuse ourselves occasionally in scooping this seat out of the soft stone. It is of the size, with something of the appearance, of a Stall in a Cathedral. This inscription is not engraven, as the former and the two following are, in the grounds.

Not by the sluggish and ungrateful pains
Of labourer plodding for his daily gains,
But by an industry that wrought in love ;
With help from female hands, that proudly strove
To aid the work, what time these walks and bowers
Were shaped to cheer dark winter's lonely hours.
(1811)

III¹

YE Lime-trees, ranged before this hallowed Urn,
Shoot forth with lively power at Spring's return ;
And be not slow a stately growth to rear
Of pillars, branching off from year to year,
Till they have learned to frame a darksome aisle ;—
That may recall to mind that awful Pile
Where Reynolds, 'mid our country's noblest dead,
In the last sanctity of fame is laid.
—There, though by right the excelling Painter sleep
Where Death and Glory a joint sabbath keep,
Yet not the less his Spirit would hold dear
Self-hidden praise, and Friendship's private tear :
Hence, on my patrimonial grounds, have I
Raised this frail tribute to his memory ;
From youth a zealous follower of the Art
That he professed ; attached to him in heart ;
Admiring, loving, and with grief and pride
Feeling what England lost when Reynolds died.

IV²

BENEATH yon eastern ridge, the craggy bound,
Rugged and high, of Charnwood's forest ground
Stand yet, but, Stranger ! hidden from thy view,
The ivied Ruins of forlorn GRACE DIEU ;
Erst a religious House, which day and night
With hymns resounded, and the chanted rite :
And when those rites had ceased, the Spot gave birth
To honourable Men of various worth :
There, on the margin of a streamlet wild,
Did Francis Beaumont sport, an eager child ;
There, under shadow of the neighbouring rocks,
Sang youthful tales of shepherds and their flocks ;

¹ Written at the request of Sir George Beaumont, Bart., and in his name, for an urn, placed by him at the termination of a newly-planted avenue, in the same grounds.

² For a seat in the groves of Coleorton.

262 Song for the Spinning-Wheel

Unconscious prelude to heroic themes,
Heart-breaking tears, and melancholy dreams
Of slighted love, and scorn, and jealous rage,
With which his genius shook the buskined stage
Communities are lost, and Empires die,
And things of holy use unhallowed lie ;
They perish ;—but the Intellect can raise,
From airy words alone, a Pile that ne'er decays.
(1811)

SONG FOR THE SPINNING-WHEEL¹

SWIFTLY turn the murmuring wheel !
Night has brought the welcome hour,
When the weary fingers feel
Help, as if from faery power ;
Dewy night o'ershades the ground ;
Turn the swift wheel round and round !
Now, beneath the starry sky,
Couch the widely-scattered sheep ;—
Ply the pleasant labour, ply !
For the spindle, while they sleep,
Runs with speed more smooth and fine,
Gathering up a trustier line.
Short-lived likings may be bred
By a glance from fickle eyes ;
But true love is like the thread
Which the kindly wool supplies,
When the flocks are all at rest
Sleeping on the mountain's breast.

(1812)

COMPOSED ON THE EVE OF THE MARRIAGE OF A FRIEND IN THE VALE OF GRASMERE

WHAT need of clamorous bells, or ribands gay,
These humble nuptials to proclaim or grace ?
Angels of love, look down upon the place ;
Shed on the chosen vale a sun-bright day !
Yet no proud gladness would the Bride display
Even for such promise :—serious is her face,
Modest her mien ; and she, whose thoughts keep pace
With gentleness, in that becoming way

¹ Founded upon a belief prevalent among the pastoral vales of Westmoreland. The belief on which this is founded I have often heard expressed by an old neighbour of Grasmere.

Will thank you. Faultless does the Maid appear ;
 No disproportion in her soul, no strife :
 But, when the closer view of wedded life
 Hath shown that nothing human can be clear
 From frailty, for that insight may the Wife
 To her indulgent Lord become more dear.

(1812)

WATER-FOWL

OBSERVED FREQUENTLY OVER THE LAKES OF RYDAL
 AND GRASMERE¹

MARK how the feathered tenants of the flood,
 With grace of motion that might scarcely seem
 Inferior to angelical, prolong
 Their curious pastime ! shaping in mid air
 (And sometimes with ambitious wing that soars
 High as the level of the mountain-tops)
 A circuit ampler than the lake beneath—
 Their own domain ; but ever, while intent
 On tracing and retracing that large round,
 Their jubilant activity evolves
 Hundreds of curves and circlets, to and fro,
 Upward and downward, progress intricate
 Yet unperplexed, as if one spirit swayed
 Their indefatigable flight. 'Tis done—
 Ten times, or more, I fancied it had ceased ;
 But lo ! the vanished company again
 Ascending ; they approach—I hear their wings,
 Faint, faint at first ; and then an eager sound,
 Past in a moment—and as faint again !
 They tempt the sun to sport amid their plumes ;
 They tempt the water, or the gleaming ice,
 To show them a fair image ; 'tis themselves,
 Their own fair forms, upon the glimmering plain,
 Painted more soft and fair as they descend
 Almost to touch ;—then up again aloft,
 Up with a sally and a flash of speed,
 As if they scorned both resting-place and rest !

(1812)

¹ "Let me be allowed the aid of verse to describe the evolutions which these visitants sometimes perform, on a fine day towards the close of winter."—*Extract from the Author's Book on the Lakes.*

264 View from the Top of Black Comb

VIEW FROM THE TOP OF BLACK COMB¹

THIS Height a ministering Angel might select :
 For from the summit of BLACK COMB (dread name
 Derived from clouds and storms !) the amplest range
 Of unobstructed prospect may be seen
 That British ground commands :—low dusky tracts,
 Where Trent is nursed, far southward ! Cambrian hills
 To the south-west, a multitudinous show ;
 And, in a line of eye-sight linked with these,
 The hoary peaks of Scotland that give birth
 To Tiviot's stream, to Annan, Tweed, and Clyde :—
 Crowding the quarter whence the sun comes forth
 Gigantic mountains rough with crags ; beneath,
 Right at the imperial station's western base
 Main ocean, breaking audibly, and stretched
 Far into silent regions blue and pale ;—
 And visibly engirding Mona's Isle
 That, as we left the plain, before our sight
 Stood like a lofty mount, uplifting slowly
 (Above the convex of the watery globe)
 Into clear view the cultured fields that streak
 Her habitable shores, but now appears
 A dwindled object, and submits to lie
 At the spectator's feet.—Yon azure ridge,
 Is it a perishable cloud ? Or there
 Do we behold the line of Erin's coast ?
 Land sometimes by the roving shepherd-swain
 (Like the bright confines of another world)
 Not doubtfully perceived.—Look homeward now .
 In depth, in height, in circuit, how serene
 The spectacle, how pure !—Of Nature's works,
 In earth, and air, and earth-embracing sea,
 A revelation infinite it seems ;
 Display august of man's inheritance,
 Of Britain's calm felicity and power !
 (1813)

¹ Black Comb stands at the southern extremity of Cumberland : its base covers a much greater extent of ground than any other mountain in those parts ; and, from its situation, the summit commands a more extensive view than any other point in Britain. Mrs. Wordsworth and I, as mentioned in the "Epistle to Sir G. H. Beaumont," lived some time under its shadow.

WRITTEN WITH A SLATE PENCIL ON A
STONE, ON THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN
OF BLACK COMB¹

STAY, bold Adventurer ; rest awhile thy limbs
On this commodious Seat ! for much remains
Of hard ascent before thou reach the top
Of this huge Eminence,—from blackness named,
And, to far-travelled storms of sea and land,
A favourite spot of tournament and war !
But thee may no such boisterous visitants
Molest ; may gentle breezes fan thy brow ;
And neither cloud conceal, nor misty air
Bedim, the grand terraqueous spectacle,
From centre to circumference, unveiled !
Know, if thou grudge not to prolong thy rest,
That on the summit whither thou art bound,
A geographic Labourer pitched his tent,
With books supplied and instruments of art,
To measure height and distance ; lonely task,
Week after week pursued !—To him was given
Full many a glimpse (but sparingly bestowed
On timid man) of Nature's processes
Upon the exalted hills. He made report
That once, while there he plied his studious work
Within that canvas Dwelling, colours, lines,
And the whole surface of the out-spread map,
Became invisible : for all around
Had darkness fallen—unthreatened, unproclaimed—
As if the golden day itself had been
Extinguished in a moment ; total gloom,
In which he sate alone, with unclosed eyes,
Upon the blinded mountain's silent top !

(1813)

NOVEMBER 1813

Now that all hearts are glad, all faces bright,
Our aged Sovereign sits, to the ebb and flow
Of states and kingdoms, to their joy or woe,
Insensible. He sits deprived of sight,

¹ The circumstance alluded to at the conclusion of these verses was told me by Dr. Satterthwaite, who was Incumbent of Bootle, a small town at the foot of Black Comb. He had the particulars from one of the engineers who was employed in making trigonometrical surveys of that region.

And lamentably wrapt in twofold night,
 Whom no weak hopes deceived ; whose mind ensued,
 Through perilous war, with regal fortitude,
 Peace that should claim respect from lawless Might.
 Dread King of kings, vouchsafe a ray divine
 To his forlorn condition ! let thy grace
 Upon his inner soul in mercy shine ;
 Permit his heart to kindle, and to embrace
 (Though it were only for a moment's space)
 The triumphs of this hour ; for they are THINE

LAODAMIA¹

"WITH sacrifice before the rising morn
 Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired ;
 And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades forlorn
 Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I required :
 Celestial pity I again implore ;—
 Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore !"

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
 With faith, the Suppliant heavenward lifts her hands ;
 While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
 Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands ;
 Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows ;
 And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror ! what hath she perceived ?—O joy !
 What doth she look on ?—whom doth she behold ?
 Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy ?
 His vital presence ? his corporeal mould ?
 It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis He !
 And a God leads him, wingèd Mercury !

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with his wand
 That calms all fear ; "Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
 Laodamia ! that at Jove's command
 Thy Husband walks the paths of upper air :
 He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space ;
 Accept the gift, behold him face to face !"

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her Lord to clasp ;
 Again that consummation she essayed ;

¹ Written at Rydal Mount. The incident of the trees growing and withering put the subject into my thoughts, and I wrote with the hope of giving it a loftier tone than, so far as I know, has been given to it by any of the Ancients who have treated of it. It cost me more trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written.

But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The Phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,
And re-assume his place before her sight
“Protesiláus, lo ! thy guide is gone !
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice :
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne ;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon ; and blest a sad abode.”

“Great Jove, Laodamía ! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect :—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive ;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain ;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

“Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die ; but me the threat could not withhold :
A generous cause a victim did demand ;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain ;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain.”

“Supreme of Heroes—bravest, noblest, best !
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore ;
Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

“But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave ;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
Thou should'st elude the malice of the grave :
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

“No Spectre greets me,—no vain Shadow this ;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side !
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride !”
Jove frowned in heaven : the conscious Parcæ threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

“This visage tells thee that my doom is past :
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys

Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains :
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

“Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion : for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul ;
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate ; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn—”

“Ah, wherefore ?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom ?
Medea’s spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth ’mid youthful peers.

“The Gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent : for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distress,
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman’s breast.

“But if thou goest, I follow—” “Peace !” he said,—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered ;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled ;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure ;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure ;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued ;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty ; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams ;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue.—“Ill,” said he,

"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night ;
"And while my youthful peers before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained ;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.
"The wished-for wind was given :—I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea ;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.
"Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved Wife !
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
The paths which we had trod—these fountains, flowers,
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.
"But should suspense permit the Foe to cry,
'Behold they tremble !—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die ?'
In soul I swept the indignity away :
Old frailties then recurred :—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.
"And Thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow ;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest re-union in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathised ;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.
"Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend—
Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end ;
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled : her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love."——
Aloud she shrieked ! for Hermes re-appears !
Round the dear Shade she would have clung—'tis vain :
The hours are past—too brief had they been years ;
And him no mortal effort can detain :

Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse She lay.

Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,
She perished ; and, as for a wilful crime,
By the just Gods whom no weak pity moved,
Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

—Yet tears to human suffering are due ;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died ;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight ;
A constant interchange of growth and blight.¹

DION

(SEE PLUTARCH)

I

FAIR is the Swan, whose majesty, prevailing
O'er breezeless water, on Locarno's lake,
Bears him on while proudly sailing
He leaves behind a moon-illumined wake :
Behold ! the mantling spirit of reserve
Fashions his neck into a goodly curve ;
An arch thrown back between luxuriant wings
Of whitest garniture, like fir-tree boughs
To which, on some unruffled morning, clings
A flaky weight of winter's purest snows !
—Behold !—as with a gushing impulse heaves
That downy prow, and softly cleaves
The mirror of the crystal flood,
Vanish inverted hill, and shadowy wood,

¹ For the account of these long-lived trees, see Pliny's *Natural History*, lib. xvi. cap. 44 ; and for the features in the character of Protesilaus see the *Iphigenia in Aulis* of Euripides. Virgil places the Shade of Laodamia in a mournful region, among unhappy Lovers,

“—His Laodamia,
It comes——”

And pendant rocks, where'er, in gliding state,
 Winds the mute Creature without visible Mate
 Or rival, save the Queen of night
 Showering down a silver light,
 From heaven, upon her chosen favourite !

So pure, so bright, so fitted to embrace,
 Where'er he turned, a natural grace
 Of haughtiness without pretence,
 And to unfold a still magnificence,
 Was princely Dion, in the power
 And beauty of his happier hour.
 Nor less the homage that was seen to wait
 On Dion's virtues, when the lunar beam
 Of Plato's genius, from its lofty sphere,
 Fell round him in the grove of Academe,
 Softening their inbred dignity austere ;—
 That he, not too elate
 With self-sufficing solitude,
 But with majestic lowliness endued,
 Might in the universal bosom reign,
 And from affectionate observance gain
 Help, under every change of adverse fate.

III

Five thousand warriors—O the rapturous day !
 Each crowned with flowers, and armed with spear and shield,
 Or ruder weapon which their course might yield,
 To Syracuse advance in bright array.
 Who leads them on ?—The anxious People see
 Long-exiled Dion marching at their head,
 He also crowned with flowers of Sicily,
 And in a white, far-beaming, corselet clad !
 Pure transport undisturbed by doubt or fear
 The Gazers feel ; and, rushing to the plain,
 Salute those Strangers as a holy train
 Or blest procession (to the Immortals dear)
 That brought their precious liberty again.
 Lo ! when the gates are entered, on each hand,
 Down the long street, rich goblets filled with wine
 In seemly order stand,
 On tables set, as if for rites divine ;—
 And, as the great Deliverer marches by,

He looks on festal ground with fruits bestrown ;
 And flowers are on his person thrown
 In boundless prodigality ;
 Nor doth the general voice abstain from prayer,
 Invoking Dion's tutelary care,
 As if a very Deity he were !

IV

Mourn, hills and groves of Attica ! and mourn
 Illyssus, bending o'er thy classic urn !
 Mourn, and lament for him whose spirit dreads
 Your once-sweet memory, studious walks and shades !
 For him who to divinity aspired,
 Not on the breath of popular applause,
 But through dependence on the sacred laws
 Framed in the schools where Wisdom dwelt retired,
 Intent to trace the ideal path of right
 (More fair than heaven's broad causeway paved with stars)
 Which Dion learned to measure with delight ;
 But he hath overleaped the eternal bars ;
 And, following guides whose craft holds no consent
 With aught that breathes the ethereal element,
 Hath stained the robes of civil power with blood,
 Unjustly shed, though for the public good.
 Whence doubts that came too late, and wishes vain,
 Hollow excuses, and triumphant pain ;
 And oft his cogitations sink as low
 As, through the abysses of a joyless heart,
 The heaviest plummet of despair can go ;
 But whence that sudden check ? that fearful start !
 He hears an uncouth sound—
 Anon his lifted eyes
 Saw at a long-drawn gallery's dusky bound,
 A Shape of more than mortal size
 And hideous aspect, stalking round and round !
 A woman's garb the Phantom wore,
 And fiercely swept the marble floor,—
 Like Auster whirling to and fro,
 His force on Caspian foam to try ;
 Or Boreas when he scours the snow
 That skins the plains of Thessaly,
 Or when aloft on Mænalus he stops
 His flight, 'mid eddying pine-tree tops !

v

So, but from toil less sign of profit reaping,
 The sullen Spectre to her purpose bowed,
 Sweeping—vehemently sweeping—
 No pause admitted, no design avowed !
 “Avaunt, inexplicable Guest !—avaunt,”
 Exclaimed the Chieftain—“Let me rather see
 The coronal that coiling vipers make ;
 The torch that flames with many a lurid flake,
 And the long train of doleful pageantry
 Which they behold, whom vengeful Furies haunt ;
 Who, while they struggle from the scourge to flee,
 Move where the blasted soil is not unworn,
 And, in their anguish, bear what other minds have borne !”

vi

But Shapes that come not at an earthly call,
 Will not depart when mortal voices bid ;
 Lords of the visionary Eye whose lid
 Once raised, remains aghast and will not fall !
 Ye Gods, thought He, that servile Implement
 Obeys a mystical intent !
 Your Minister would brush away
 The spots that to my soul adhere ;
 But should she labour night and day,
 They will not, cannot disappear ;
 Whence angry perturbations,—and that look
 Which no Philosophy can brook !

vii

Ill-fated Chief ! there are whose hopes are built
 Upon the ruins of thy glorious name ;
 Who, through the portal of one moment's guilt,
 Pursue thee with their deadly aim !
 O matchless perfidy ! portentous lust
 Of monstrous crime !—that horror-striking blade,
 Drawn in defiance of the Gods, hath laid
 The noble Syracusan low in dust !
 Shudder the walls—the marble city wept—
 And sylvan places heaved a pensive sigh ;
 But in calm peace the appointed Victim slept,
 As he had fallen in magnanimity :
 Of spirit too capacious to require
 That Destiny her course should change ; too just
 To his own native greatness to desire
 That wretched boon, days lengthened by mistrust.

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So were the hopeless troubles, that involved
The soul of Dion, instantly dissolved.
Released from life and cares of princely state,
He left this moral grafted on his Fate,
"Him only pleasure leads, and peace attends,
Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends,
Whose means are fair and 'spotless as his ends."
(1814)

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND

1814

I

SUGGESTED BY A BEAUTIFUL RUIN UPON ONE OF THE
ISLANDS OF LOCH LOMOND, A PLACE CHOSEN FOR THE
RETREAT OF A SOLITARY INDIVIDUAL, FROM WHOM THIS
HABITATION ACQUIRED THE NAME OF

THE BROWNIE'S CELL

I

To barren heath, bleak moor, and quaking fen,
Or depth of labyrinthine glen ;
Or into trackless forest sent
With trees, whose lofty umbrage met ;
World-wearied Men withdrew of yore ;
(Penance their trust, and prayer their store
And in the wilderness were bound
To such apartments as they found,
Or with a new ambition raised ;
That God might suitably be praised.

II

High lodged the *Warrior*, like a bird of prey ;
Or where broad waters round him lay :
But this wild Ruin is no ghost
Of his devices—buried, lost !
Within this little lonely isle
There stood a consecrated Pile,
Where tapers burned, and mass was sung,
For them whose timid Spirits clung
To mortal succour, though the tomb
Had fixed, for ever fixed, their doom !

¹ The account of the "Brownie's Cell" and the Brownies was given me by a man we met with on the banks of Loch Lomond, a little above Tarbert, and in front of a huge mass of rock, by the side of which, we were told, preachings were often held in the open air. The place is quite a solitude, and the surrounding scenery very striking.

III

Upon those servants of another world
When madding Power her bolts had hurled,
Their habitation shook ;—it fell,
And perished, save one narrow cell ;
Whither, at length, a Wretch retired
Who neither grovelled nor aspired :
He, struggling in the net of pride,
The future scorned, the past defied ;
Still tempering, from the unguilty forge
Of vain conceit, an iron scourge !

IV

Proud Remnant was he of a fearless Race,
Who stood and flourished face to face
With their perennial hills ;—but Crime,
Hastening the stern decrees of Time,
Brought low a Power, which from its home
Burst, when repose grew wearisome ;
And, taking impulse from the sword,
And, mocking its own plighted word,
Had found, in ravage widely dealt,
Its warfare's bourn, its travel's belt !

V

All, all were dispossessed, save him whose smile
Shot lightning through this lonely Isle !
No right had he but what he made
To this small spot, his leafy shade ;
But the ground lay within that ring
To which he only dared to cling ;
Renouncing here, as worse than dead,
The craven few who bowed the head
Beneath the change ; who heard a claim
How loud ! yet lived in peace with shame.

VI

From year to year this shaggy Mortal went
(So seemed it) down a strange descent :
Till they, who saw his outward frame,
Fixed on him an unhallowed name ;
Him, free from all malicious taint,
And guiding, like the Patmos Saint,
A pen unwearied—to indite,
In his lone Isle, the dreams of night ;
Impassioned dreams, that strove to span
The faded glories of his Clan !

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VII

Suns that through blood their western harbour sought,
And stars that in their courses fought ;
Towers rent, winds combating with woods,
Lands deluged by unbridled floods ;
And beast and bird that from the spell
Of sleep took import terrible ;—
These types mysterious (if the show
Of battle and the routed foe
Had failed) would furnish an array
Of matter for the dawning day !

VIII

How disappeared He?—ask the newt and toad,
Inheritors of his abode ;
The otter crouching undisturbed,
In her dank cleft ;—but be thou curbed,
O froward Fancy ! 'mid a scene
Of aspect winning and serene ;
For those offensive creatures shun
The inquisition of the sun !
And in this region flowers delight,
And all is lovely to the sight.

IX

Spring finds not here a melancholy breast,
When she applies her annual test
To dead and living ; when her breath
Quickens, as now, the withered heath ;—
Nor flaunting Summer—when he throws
His soul into the briar-rose ;
Or calls the lily from her sleep
Prolonged beneath the bordering deep ;
Nor Autumn, when the viewless wren
Is warbling near the BROWNIE'S Den.

X

Wild Relique ! beauteous as the chosen spot
In Nysa's isle, the embellished grot ;
Whither, by care of Libyan Jove,
(High Servant of paternal Love)
Young Bacchus was conveyed—to lie
Safe from his step-dame Rhea's eye ;
Where bud, and bloom, and fruitage, glowed,
Close-crowding round the infant-god ;
All colours,—and the liveliest streak
A foil to his celestial cheek !

II

COMPOSED AT CORA LINN,
IN SIGHT OF WALLACE'S TOWER

LORD of the vale ! astounding Flood ;
The dullest leaf in this thick wood
Quakes—conscious of thy power ;
The caves reply with hollow moan ;
And vibrates, to its central stone,
Yon time-cemented Tower !

And yet how fair the rural scene !
For thou, O Clyde, hast ever been
Beneficent as strong ;
Pleased in refreshing dews to steep
The little trembling flowers that peep
Thy shelving rocks among.

Hence all who love their country, love
To look on thee—delight to rove
Where they thy voice can hear ;
And, to the patriot-warrior's Shade,
Lord of the vale ! to Heroes laid
In dust, that voice is dear !

Along thy banks, at dead of night
Sweeps visibly the Wallace Wight ;
Or stands, in warlike vest,
Aloft, beneath the moon's pale beam,
A Champion worthy of the stream,
Yon grey tower's living crest !

But clouds and envious darkness hide
A Form not doubtfully descried :—
Their transient mission o'er,
O say to what blind region flee
These Shapes of awful phantasy ?
To what untrodden shore ?

Less than divine command they spurn
But this we from the mountains learn,
And this the valleys show ;
That never will they deign to hold
Communion where the heart is cold
To human weal and woe.

The man of abject soul in vain
Shall walk the Marathonian plain
Or thrid the shadowy gloom,

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That still invests the guardian Pass,
Where stood, sublime, Leonidas
Devoted to the tomb.

And let no Slave his head incline,
Or kneel before the votive shrine
By Uri's lake, where Tell
Leapt, from his storm-vext boat, to land,
Heaven's Instrument, for by his hand
That day the Tyrant fell

III

EFFUSION

IN THE PLEASURE-GROUND ON THE BANKS OF THE BRAN,
NEAR DUNKELD¹

WHAT He—who, 'mid the kindred throng
Of Heroes that inspired his song,
Doth yet frequent the hill of storms,
The stars dim-twinkling through their forms
What ! Ossian here—a painted Thrall,
Mute fixture on a stuccoed wall ;
To serve—an unsuspected screen
For show that must not yet be seen ;
And, when the moment comes, to part
And vanish by mysterious art ;
Head, harp, and body, split asunder,
For ingress to a world of wonder ;
A gay saloon, with waters dancing
Upon the sight wherever glancing ;
One loud cascade in front, and lo !
A thousand like it, white as snow—
Streams on the walls, and torrent-foam
As active round the hollow dome,
Illusive cataracts ! of their terrors
Not stripped, nor voiceless in the mirrors,
That catch the pageant from the flood
Thundering adown a rocky wood.

¹ "The waterfall, by a loud roaring, warned us when we must expect it. We were first, however, conducted into a small apartment, where the Gardener desired us to look at a picture of Ossian, which, while he was telling the history of the young Artist who executed the work, disappeared, parting in the middle—flying asunder as by the touch of magic—and lo ! we are at the entrance of a splendid apartment, which was almost dizzy and alive with waterfalls, that tumbled in all directions ; the great cascade, opposite the window, which faced us, being reflected in innumerable mirrors upon the ceiling and against the walls."—*Extract from the Journal of my Fellow-traveller.*

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What pains to dazzle and confound !
 What strife of colour, shape and sound
 In this quaint medley, that might seem
 Devised out of a sick man's dream !
 Strange scene, fantastic and uneasy
 As ever made a maniac dizzy,
 When disenchanted from the mood
 That loves on sullen thoughts to brood !
 : O Nature—in thy changeful visions,
 Through all thy most abrupt transitions
 Smooth, graceful, tender, or sublime—
 Ever averse to pantomime,
 Thee neither do they know nor us
 Thy servants, who can trifle thus ;
 Else verily the sober powers
 Of rock that frowns, and stream that roars,
 Exalted by congenial sway
 Of Spirits, and the undying Lay,
 And Names that moulder not away,
 Had wakened some redeeming thought
 More worthy of this favoured Spot ;
 Recalled some feeling—to set free
 The Bard from such indignity !

¹ The Effigies of a Valiant Wight
 I once beheld, a Templar Knight ;
 Not prostrate, not like those that rest
 On tombs, with palms together prest,
 But sculptured out of living stone,
 And standing upright and alone,
 Both hands with rival energy
 Employed in setting his sword free
 From its dull sheath—stern sentinel
 Intent to guard St. Robert's cell ;
 As if with memory of the affray
 Far distant, when, as legends say,
 The Monks of Fountain's thronged to force
 From its dear home the Hermit's corse,
 That in their keeping it might lie,
 To crown their abbey's sanctity.
 So had they rushed into the grot
 Of sense despised, a world forgot,
 And torn him from his loved retreat,
 Where altar-stone and rock-hewn seat
 Still hint that quiet best is found,
¹ On the banks of the River Nid, near Knaresborough.

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Even by the *Living*, under ground ;
 But a bold Knight, the selfish aim
 Defeating, put the monks to shame,
 There where you see his image stand
 Bare to the sky, with threatening brand
 Which lingering Nid is proud to show
 Reflected in the pool below.

Thus, like the men of earliest days,
 Our sires set forth their grateful praise :
 Uncouth the workmanship, and rude !
 But, nursed in mountain solitude,
 Might some aspiring artist dare
 To seize whate'er, through misty air,
 A ghost, by glimpses, may present
 Of imitable lineament,
 And give the phantom an array
 That less should scorn the abandoned clay ;
 Then let him hew with patient stroke
 An Ossian out of mural rock,
 And leave the figurative Man—
 Upon thy margin, roaring Bran !—
 Fixed, like the Templar of the steep,
 An everlasting watch to keep :
 With local sanctities in trust,
 More precious than a hermit's dust ;
 And virtues through the mass infused,
 Which old idolatry abused.

What though the Granite would deny
 All fervour to the sightless eye ;
 And touch from rising suns in vain
 Solicit a Memnonian strain ;
 Yet, in some fit of anger sharp,
 The wind might force the deep-grooved harp
 To utter melancholy moans
 Not unconnected with the tones
 Of soul-sick flesh and weary bones ;
 While grove and river notes would lend,
 Less deeply sad, with these to blend !

Vain pleasures of luxurious life,
 For ever with yourselves at strife ;
 Through town and country both deranged
 By affectations interchanged,
 And all the perishable gauds
 That heaven-deserted man applauds ;
 When will your hapless patrons learn

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To watch and ponder—to discern
The freshness, the everlasting youth,
Of admiration sprung from truth ;
From beauty infinitely growing
Upon a mind with love o'erflowing—
To sound the depths of every Art
That seeks its wisdom through the heart ?

Thus (where the intrusive Pile, ill-graced
With baubles of theatric taste,
O'erlooks the torrent breathing showers
On motley bands of alien flowers
In stiff confusion set or sown,
Till Nature cannot find her own,
Or keep a remnant of the sod
Which Caledonian Heroes trod)
I mused ; and, thirsting for redress,
Recoiled into the wilderness.

IV

YARROW VISITED¹

SEPTEMBER 1814

AND is this—Yarrow ?—*This* the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream ?
An image that hath perished !
O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness !

Yet why ?—a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings ;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted ;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness ;

¹ As mentioned in my verses on the death of the Ettrick Shepherd,
my first visit to Yarrow was in his company.

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Mild dawn of promise ! that excludes
 All profitless dejection ;
 Though not unwilling here to admit
 A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower
 Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding ?
 His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
 On which the herd is feeding :
 And haply from this crystal pool,
 Now peaceful as the morning,
 The Water-wraith ascended thrice—
 And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
 The haunts of happy Lovers,
 The path that leads them to the grove,
 The leafy grove that covers :
 And Pity sanctifies the Verse
 That paints, by strength of sorrow,
 The unconquerable strength of love ;
 Bear witness, rueful Yarrow !

But thou, that didst appear so fair
 To fond imagination,
 Dost rival in the light of day
 Her delicate creation :
 Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
 A softness still and holy ;
 The grace of forest charms decayed,
 And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
 Rich groves of lofty stature,
 With Yarrow winding through the pomp
 Of cultivated nature ;
 And, rising from those lofty groves,
 Behold a Ruin hoary !
 The shattered front of Newark's Towers,
 Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
 For sportive youth to stray in ;
 For manhood to enjoy his strength ;
 And age to wear away in !
 Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
 A covert for protection

'From the Dark Chambers Freed' 283

Of tender thoughts, that nestle there—
The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather !
And what if I enwreathed my own !
'Twere no offence to reason ;
The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee ;
A ray of fancy still survives—
Her sunshine plays upon thee !
Thy ever-youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure ;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the Heights,
They melt, and soon must vanish ;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
Sad thought, which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow !
Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

"FROM THE DARK CHAMBERS OF
DEJECTION FREED"¹

FROM the dark chambers of dejection freed,
Spurning the unprofitable yoke of care,
Rise, GILLIES, rise ; the gales of youth shall bear
Thy genius forward like a winged steed.
Though bold Bellerophon (so Jove decreed

¹ Composed in Fife, during my Scotch tour with Mrs. Wordsworth and my sister, in the year 1814. Poor Gillies never rose above that course of extravagance in which he was at that time living, and which soon reduced him to poverty and all its degrading shifts, mendicity being far from the worst. I grieve whenever I think of him, for he was far from being without genius, and had a generous heart, not always to be found in men given up to profusion. He was nephew of Lord Gillies, the Scotch judge, and also of the historian of Greece. He was cousin to Miss Margaret Gillies, who painted so many portraits with success in our house.

In wrath) fell headlong from the fields of air,
 Yet a rich guerdon waits on minds that dare,
 If aught be in them of immortal seed,
 And reason govern that audacious flight
 Which heavenward they direct.—Then droop not thou,
 Erroneously renewing a sad vow
 In the low dell 'mid Roslin's faded grove :
 A cheerful life is what the Muses love,
 A soaring spirit is their prime delight.
 (1814)

LINES

WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF IN A COPY OF THE AUTHOR'S
 POEM "THE EXCURSION," UPON HEARING OF THE
 DEATH OF THE LATE VICAR OF KENDAL

To public notice, with reluctance strong,
 Did I deliver this unfinished Song ;
 Yet for one happy issue ;—and I look
 With self-congratulation on the Book
 Which pious, learned, MURFITT saw and read ;—
 Upon my thoughts his saintly Spirit fed ;
 He conned the new-born Lay with grateful heart—
 Foreboding not how soon he must depart ;
 Unweeting that to him the joy was given
 Which good men take with them from earth to heaven.
 (1814)

TO B. R. HAYDON

HIGH is our calling, Friend !—Creative Art
 (Whether the instrument of words she use,
 Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,)
 Demands the service of a mind and heart,
 Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
 Heroically fashioned—to infuse
 Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
 While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
 And, oh ! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
 Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
 Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
 And in the soul admit of no decay,
 Brook no continuance of weakmindedness—
 Great is the glory, for the strife is hard !

(1815)

ARTEGAL AND ELIDURE¹

(SEE THE CHRONICLE OF GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH AND
MILTON'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND)

WHERE be the temples which, in Britain's Isle,
For his paternal Gods, the Trojan raised ?
Gone like a morning dream, or like a pile
Of clouds that in cerulean ether blazed !
Ere Julius landed on her white-cliffed shore,
They sank, delivered o'er
To fatal dissolution ; and, I ween,
No vestige then was left that such had ever been.
Nathless, a British record (long concealed
In old Armorica, whose secret springs
No Gothic conqueror ever drank) revealed
The marvellous current of forgotten things ;
How Brutus came, by oracles impelled,
And Albion's giants quelled,
A brood whom no civility could melt,
"Who never tasted grace, and goodness ne'er had felt."
By brave Corineus aided, he subdued,
And rooted out the intolerable kind ;
And this too-long-polluted land imbued
With goodly arts and usages refined ;
Whence golden harvests, cities, warlike towers,
And pleasure's sumptuous bowers ;
Whence all the fixed delights of house and home,
Friendships that will not break, and love that cannot roam.
O, happy Britain ! region all too fair
For self-delighting fancy to endure
That silence only should inhabit there,
Wild beasts, or uncouth savages impure !
But, intermingled with the generous seed,
Grew many a poisonous weed ;
Thus fares it still with all that takes its birth
From human care, or grows upon the breast of earth.
Hence, and how soon ! that war of vengeance waged
By Guendolen against her faithless lord ;

¹ Written at Rydal Mount, as a token of affectionate respect for the memory of Milton. "I have determined," says he, in his preface to his History of England, "to bestow the telling over even of these reputed tales, be it for nothing else but in favour of our English Poets and Rhetoricians, who by their wit will know how to use them indifferently."

Till she, in jealous fury unassuaged
 Had slain his paramour with ruthless sword ;
 Then, into Severn hideously defiled,
 She flung her blameless child,
 Sabrina,—vowing that the stream should bear
 That name through every age, her hatred to declare.

So speaks the Chronicle, and tells of Lear
 By his ungrateful daughters turned adrift.
 Ye lightnings, hear his voice !—they cannot hear,
 Nor can the winds restore his simple gift.
 But One there is, a Child of nature meek,

 Who comes her Sire to seek ;
 And he, recovering sense, upon her breast
 Leans smilingly, and sinks into a perfect rest.

There too we read of Spenser's fairy themes,
 And those that Milton loved in youthful years ;
 The sage enchanter Merlin's subtle schemes ;
 The feats of Arthur and his knightly peers ;
 Of Arthur,—who, to upper light restored,

 With that terrific sword
 Which yet he brandishes for future war,
 Shall lift his country's fame above the polar star !

What wonder, then, if in such ample field
 Of old tradition, one particular flower
 Doth seemingly in vain its fragrance yield,
 And bloom unnoticed even to this late hour ?
 Now, gentle Muses, your assistance grant,

 While I this flower transplant
 Into a garden stored with Poesy ;
 Where flowers and herbs unite, and haply some weeds be,
 That, wanting not wild grace, are from all mischief free !

A KING more worthy of respect and love
 Than wise Gorboduc ruled not in his day ;
 And grateful Britain prospered far above
 All neighbouring countries through his righteous sway ;
 He poured rewards and honours on the good ;

 The oppressor he withstood ;
 And while he served the Gods with reverence due
 Fields smiled, and temples rose, and towns and cities grew.

He died, whom Artegal succeeds—his son ;
 But how unworthy of that sire was he !
 A hopeful reign, auspiciously begun,
 Was darkened soon by foul iniquity.

From crime to crime he mounted, till at length
 The nobles leagued their strength
 With a vexed people, and the tyrant chased ;
 And, on the vacant throne, his worthier Brother placed.
 From realm to realm the humbled Exile went,
 Suppliant for aid his kingdom to regain ;
 In many a court, and many a warrior's tent,
 He urged his persevering suit in vain.
 Him, in whose wretched heart ambition failed,
 Dire poverty assailed ;
 And, tired with slights his pride no more could brook,
 He towards his native country cast a longing look.
 Fair blew the wished-for wind—the voyage sped ;
 He landed ; and, by many dangers scared,
 “ Poorly provided, poorly followed,”
 To Calaterium's forest he repaired.
 How changed from him who, born to highest place,
 Had swayed the royal mace,
 Flattered and feared, despised yet deified,
 In Troynovant, his seat by silver Thames's side !
 From that wild region where the crownless King
 Lay in concealment with his scanty train,
 Supporting life by water from the spring,
 And such chance food as outlaws can obtain,
 Unto the few whom he esteems his friends
 A messenger he sends ;
 And from their secret loyalty requires
 Shelter and daily bread,—the sum of his desires.
 While he the issue waits, at early morn
 Wandering by stealth abroad, he chanced to hear
 A startling outcry made by hound and horn,
 From which the tusky wild boar flies in fear ;
 And, scouring toward him o'er the grassy plain,
 Behold the hunter train !
 He bids his little company advance
 With seeming unconcern and steady countenance.
 The royal Elidure, who leads the chase,
 Hath checked his foaming courser :—can it be !
 Methinks that I should recognise that face,
 Though much disguised by long adversity !
 He gazed rejoicing, and again he gazed,
 Confounded and amazed—
 “ It is the king, my brother !” and, by sound
 Of his own voice confirmed, he leaps upon the ground.

Long, strict, and tender was the embrace he gave,
 Feebly returned by daunted Artegal ;
 Whose natural affection doubts enslave,
 And apprehensions dark and criminal.
 Loth to restrain the moving interview,

 The attendant lords withdrew ;
 And, while they stood upon the plain apart,
 Thus Elidure, by words, relieved his struggling heart.

“ By heavenly Powers conducted, we have met ;
 —O Brother ! to my knowledge lost so long,
 But neither lost to love, nor to regret,
 Nor to my wishes lost ;—forgive the wrong,
 (Such it may seem) if I thy crown have borne,

 Thy royal mantle worn :
 I was their natural guardian ; and 'tis just
 That now I should restore what hath been held in trust.”

A while the astonished Artegal stood mute,
 Then thus exclaimed : “ To me, of titles shorn,
 And stripped of power ! me, feeble, destitute,
 To me a kingdom ! spare the bitter scorn :
 If justice ruled the breast of foreign kings,

 Then, on the wide-spread wings
 Of war, had I returned to claim my right ;
 This will I here avow, not dreading thy despire.”

“ I do not blame thee,” Elidure replied ;
 “ But, if my looks did with my words agree,
 I should at once be trusted, not defied,
 And thou from all disquietude be free.
 May the unsullied Goddess of the chase,

 Who to this blessed place
 At this blest moment led me, if I speak
 With insincere intent, on me her vengeance wreak !

“ Were this same spear, which in my hand I grasp,
 The British sceptre, here would I to thee
 The symbol yield ; and would undo this clasp,
 If it confined the robe of sovereignty.
 Odious to me the pomp of regal court,

 And joyless sylvan sport,
 While thou art roving, wretched and forlorn,
 Thy couch the dewy earth, thy roof the forest thorn !”

Then Artegal thus spake : “ I only sought
 Within this realm a place of safe retreat :

Beware of rousing an ambitious thought ;
 Beware of kindling hopes, for me unmeet !
 Thou art reputed wise, but in my mind
 Art pitiaibly blind :

Full soon this generous purpose thou may'st rue,
 When that which has been done no wishes can undo.

"Who, when a crown is fixed upon his head,
 Would balance claim with claim, and right with right ?
 But thou—I know not how inspired, how led—
 Wouldst change the course of things in all men's sight !
 And this for one who cannot imitate

Thy virtue, who may hate :
 For, if, by such strange sacrifice restored,
 He reign, thou still must be his king, and sovereign lord ;

"Lifted in magnanimity above
 Aught that my feeble nature could perform,
 Or even conceive ; surpassing me in love
 Far as in power the eagle doth the worm.
 I, Brother ! only should be king in name,
 And govern to my shame ;
 A shadow in a hated land, while all
 Of glad or willing service to thy share would fall."

"Believe it not," said Elidure ; "respect
 Awaits on virtuous life, and ever most
 Attends on goodness with dominion decked,
 Which stands the universal empire's boast ;
 This can thy own experience testify :

Nor shall thy foes deny
 That, in the gracious opening of thy reign,
 Our father's spirit seemed in thee to breathe again.

"And what if o'er thy bright unbosoming
 Clouds of disgrace and envious fortune past !
 Have we not seen the glories of the spring
 By veil of noontide darkness overcast ?
 The frith that glittered like a warrior's shield,
 The sky, the gay green field,
 Are vanished ; gladness ceases in the groves,
 And trepidation strikes the blackened mountain-coves.

"But is that gloom dissolved ? how passing clear
 Seems the wide world, far brighter than before !
 Even so thy latent worth will re-appear,
 Gladdening the people's heart from shore to shore ;

For youthful faults ripe virtues shall atone ;
 Re-seated on thy throne,
 Proof shalt thou furnish that misfortune, pain,
 And sorrow, have confirmed thy native right to reign.

“ But, not to overlook what thou may'st know,
 Thy enemies are neither weak nor few ;
 And circumspect must be our course, and slow,
 Or from my purpose ruin may ensue.
 Dismiss thy followers ;—let them calmly wait
 Such change in thy estate
 As I already have in thought devised ;
 And which, with caution due, may soon be realised.”

The Story tells what courses were pursued,
 Until king Elidure, with full consent
 Of all his peers, before the multitude,
 Rose,—and, to consummate this just intent,
 Did place upon his Brother's head the crown,
 Relinquished by his own ;
 Then to his people cried, “ Receive your lord,
 Gorbonian's first-born son, your rightful king restored !”

The people answered with a loud acclaim :
 Yet more ;—heart-smitten by the heroic deed,
 The reinstated Artegal became
 Earth's noblest penitent ; from bondage freed
 Of vice—thenceforth unable to subvert

 Or shake his high desert.
 Long did he reign ; and, when he died, the tear
 Of universal grief bedewed his honoured bier.

Thus was a Brother by a Brother saved ;
 With whom a crown (temptation that hath set
 Discord in hearts of men till they have braved
 Their nearest kin with deadly purpose met)
 'Gainst duty weighed, and faithful love, did seem

 A thing of no esteem ;
 And, from this triumph of affection pure,
 He bore the lasting name of “ pious Elidure.”
 (1815)

SEPTEMBER 1815

WHILE not a leaf seems faded ; while the fields,
 With ripening harvest prodigally fair,
 In brightest sunshine bask ; this nipping air,
 Sent from some distant clime where Winter wilds

His icy scimitar, a foretaste yields
 Of bitter change, and bids the flowers beware;
 And whispers to the silent birds, "Prepare
 Against the threatening foe your trustiest shields."
 For me, who under kindlier laws belong
 To Nature's tuneful quire, this rustling dry
 Through leaves yet green, and yon crystalline sky,
 Announce a season potent to renew,
 'Mid frost and snow, the instinctive joys of song,
 And nobler cares than listless summer knew.

NOVEMBER I¹

How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright
 The effluence from yon distant mountain's head,
 Which, strewn with snow smooth as the sky can shed,
 Shines like another sun—on mortal sight
 Uprisen, as if to check approaching Night,
 And all her twinkling stars. Who now would tread
 If so he might, yon mountain's glittering head—
 Terrestrial, but a surface, by the flight
 Of sad mortality's earth-sullying wing,
 Unswept, unstained? Nor shall the aerial Powers
 Dissolve that beauty, destined to endure,
 White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
 Through all vicissitudes, till genial Spring
 Has filled the laughing vales with welcome flowers.
 (1815)

"THE FAIREST HUES OF ETHER FADE"²

THE fairest, brightest, hues of ether fade;
 The sweetest notes must terminate and die;
 O Friend! thy flute has breathed a harmony
 Softly resounded through this rocky glade;
 Such strains of rapture as³ the Genius played
 In his still haunt on Bagdad's summit high;
 He who stood visible to Mirza's eye,
 Never before to human sight betrayed.
 Lo, in the vale, the mists of evening spread!

¹ Suggested on the banks of the Brathay by the sight of Langdale Pikes. It is delightful to remember these moments of far-distant days, which probably would have been forgotten if the impression had not been transferred to verse.

² Suggested at Hacket, which is on the craggy ridge that rises between the two Langdales and looks towards Windermere.

³ See the Vision of Mirza in the *Spectator*.

'Hail, Twilight'

The visionary Arches are not there,
Nor the green Islands, nor the shining Seas:
Yet sacred is to me this Mountain's head,
Whence I have risen, uplifted, on the breeze
Of harmony, above all earthly care.

"WEAK IS THE WILL OF MAN"

'WEAK is the will of Man, his judgment blind;
Remembrance persecutes, and Hope betrays;
Heavy is woe;—and joy, for human-kind,
A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze!
Thus might ~~he~~ paint our lot of mortal days
Who wants the glorious faculty assigned
To elevate the more-than-reasoning Mind,
And colour life's dark cloud with orient rays.
Imagination is that sacred power,
Imagination lofty and refined;
'Tis hers to pluck the amaranthine flower
Of Faith, and round the Sufferer's temples bind
Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,
And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind.

"HAIL, TWILIGHT"

HAIL, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour!
Not dull art Thou as undiscerning Night;
But studious only to remove from sight
Day's mutable distinctions.—Ancient Power!
Thus did the waters gleam, the mountains lower,
To the rude Briton, when, in wolf-skin vest
Here roving wild, he laid him down to rest
On the bare rock, or through a leafy bower
Looked ere his eyes were closed. By him was seen
The self-same Vision which we now behold,
At thy meek bidding, shadowy Power! brought forth
These mighty barriers, and the gulf between;
The flood, the stars,—a spectacle as old
As the beginning of the heavens and earth!

"THE SHEPHERD, LOOKING EASTWARD"

THE Shepherd, looking eastward, softly said,
"Bright is thy veil, O Moon, as thou art bright.
Forthwith, that little cloud, in ether spread
And penetrated all with tender light,
She cast away, and showed her fulgent head
Uncovered; dazzling the Beholder's sight

‘Mark the Concentred Hazels’ 293

As if to vindicate her beauty’s right
Her beauty thoughtlessly disparaged.
Meanwhile that veil, removed or thrown aside,
Went floating from her, darkening as it went ;
And a huge mass, to bury or to hide,
Approached this glory of the firmament ;
Who meekly yields, and is obscured—content
With one calm triumph of a modest pride.

“EVEN AS A DRAGON’S EYE”

EVEN as a dragon’s eye that feels the stress
Of a bedimming sleep, or as a lamp
Suddenly glaring through sepulchral damp,
So burns yon Taper ’mid a black recess
Of mountains, silent, dreary, motionless :
The lake below reflects it not ; the sky,
Muffled in clouds, affords no company
To mitigate and cheer its loneliness.
Yet, round the body of that joyless Thing
Which sends so far its melancholy light,
Perhaps are seated in domestic ring
A gay society with faces bright,
Conversing, reading, laughing ;—or they sing,
While hearts and voices in the song unite.

“MARK THE CONCENTRED HAZELS THAT
ENCLOSE”¹

MARK the concentrated hazels that enclose
Yon old grey Stone, protected from the ray
Of noontide suns :—and even the beams that play
And glance, while wantonly the rough wind blows,
Are seldom free to touch the moss that grows
Upon that roof, amid embowering gloom,
The very image framing of a Tomb,
In which some ancient Chieftain finds repose
Among the lonely mountains.—Live, ye trees !
And thou, grey Stone, the pensive likeness keep
Of a dark chamber where the Mighty sleep :
For more than Fancy to the influence bends
When solitary Nature condescends
To mimic Time’s forlorn humanities.

¹ Suggested in the wild hazel wood at the foot of Helm-crag, where the stone still lies, with others of like form and character, though much of the wood that veiled it from the glare of day has been felled.

TO THE POET, JOHN DYER

BARD of the Fleece, whose skilful genius made
 That work a living landscape fair and bright ;
 Nor hallowed less with musical delight
 Than those soft scenes through which thy childhood strayed,
 Those southern tracts of Cambria, "deep embayed,
 With green hills fenced, with ocean's murmur lulled ;"
 Though hasty Fame hath many a chaplet culled
 For worthless brows, while in the pensive shade
 Of cold neglect she leaves thy head ungraced,
 Yet pure and powerful minds, hearts meek and still,
 A grateful few, shall love thy modest Lay,
 Long as the shepherd's bleating flock shall stray
 O'er naked Snowdon's wide ærial waste ;
 Long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill !

"BROOK ! WHOSE SOCIETY THE POET SEEKS"

BROOK ! whose society the Poet seeks,
 Intent his wasted spirits to renew ;
 And whom the curious Painter doth pursue
 Through rocky passes, among flowery creeks,
 And tracks thee dancing down thy water-breaks ;
 If wish were mine some type of thee to view,
 Thee, and not thee thyself, I would not do
 Like Grecian Artists, give thee human cheeks,
 Channels for tears ; no Naiad should'st thou be,—
 Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints nor hairs :
 It seems the Eternal Soul is clothed in thee
 With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,
 And hath bestowed on thee a safer good ;
 Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

"SURPRISED BY JOY—IMPATIENT AS THE
WIND" ¹

SURPRISED by joy—impatient as the Wind
 I turned to share the transport—Oh ! with whom
 But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
 That spot which no vicissitude can find ?
 Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind—
 But how could I forget thee ? Through what power,

¹ This was in fact written long after Catharine's death. [See "Catharine" p. 252.—*Ed.*]

Even for the least division of an hour,
 Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
 To my most grievous loss?—That thought's return
 Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
 Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
 Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
 That neither present time, nor years unborn
 Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

ODE

THE MORNING OF THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A GENERAL
 THANKSGIVING, JANUARY 18, 1816¹

I

HAIL, orient Conqueror of gloomy Night!
 Thou that canst shed the bliss of gratitude
 On hearts howe'er insensible or rude;
 Whether thy punctual visitations smite
 The haughty towers where monarchs dwell;
 Or thou, impartial Sun, with presence bright
 Cheer'st the low threshold of the peasant's cell!
 Not unrejoiced I see thee climb the sky
 In naked splendour, clear from mist or haze,
 Or cloud approaching to divert the rays,
 Which even in deepest winter testify
 Thy power and majesty,
 Dazzling the vision that presumes to gaze.
 —Well does thine aspect usher in this Day;
 As aptly suits therewith that modest pace
 Submitted to the chains
 That bind thee to the path which God ordains
 That thou shalt trace,
 Till, with the heavens and earth, thou pass away!
 Nor less, the stillness of these frosty plains,
 Their utter stillness, and the silent grace
 Of yon ethereal summits white with snow,
 (Whose tranquil pomp and spotless purity
 Report of storms gone by
 To us who tread below)
 Do with the service of this Day accord.
 —Divinest Object which the uplifted eye
 Of mortal man is suffered to behold;

¹ The first stanza of this Ode was composed almost extempore, in front of Rydal Mount, before church-time, and on such a morning and precisely with such objects before my eyes as are here described.

Thou, who upon those snow-clad Heights has poured
 Meek lustre, nor forget'st the humble Vale ;
 Thou who dost warm Earth's universal mould,
 And for thy bounty wert not unadored

By pious men of old ;
 Once more, heart-cheering Sun, I bid thee hail !
 Bright be thy course to-day, let not this promise fail !

II

'Mid the deep quiet of this morning hour,
 All nature seems to hear me while I speak,
 By feelings urged that do not vainly seek
 Apt language, ready as the tuneful notes
 That stream in blithe succession from the throats

Of birds, in leafy bower,
 Warbling a farewell to a vernal shower.
 —There is a radiant though a short-lived flame,
 That burns for Poets in the dawning east ;
 And oft my soul hath kindled at the same,
 When the captivity of sleep had ceased ;
 But He who fixed immoveably the frame
 Of the round world, and built, by laws as strong,
 A solid refuge for distress—

The towers of righteousness ;
 He knows that from a holier altar came
 The quickening spark of this day's sacrifice ;
 Knows that the source is nobler whence doth rise
 The current of this matin song ;
 That deeper far it lies
 Than aught dependent on the fickle skies.

III

Have we not conquered ?—by the vengeful sword ?
 Ah no, by dint of Magnanimity ;
 That curbed the baser passions, and left free
 A loyal band to follow their liege Lord
 Clear-sighted Honour, and his staid Compeers,
 Along a track of most unnatural years ;
 In execution of heroic deeds
 Whose memory, spotless as the crystal beads
 Of morning dew upon the untrodden meads,
 Shall live enrolled above the starry spheres.
 He, who in concert with an earthly string
 Of Britain's acts would sing,
 He with enraptured voice will tell
 Of One whose spirit no reverse could quell ;

Of One that 'mid the failing never failed—
 Who paints how Britain struggled and prevailed
 Shall represent her labouring with an eye
 Of circumspect humanity ;
 Shall show her clothed with strength and skill,
 All martial duties to fulfil ;
 Firm as a rock in stationary fight ;
 In motion rapid as the lightning's gleam ;
 Fierce as a flood-gate bursting at midnight
 To rouse the wicked from their giddy dream—
 Woe, woe to all that face her in the field !
 Appalled she may not be, and cannot yield.

IV

And thus is *missed* the sole true glory
 That can belong to human story !
 At which they only shall arrive
 Who through the abyss of weakness dive.
 The very humblest are too proud of heart ;
 And one brief day is rightly set apart
 For Him who lifteth up and layeth low ;
 For that Almighty God to whom we owe,
 Say not that we have vanquished—but that we survive.

V

How dreadful the dominion of the impure !
 Why should the Song be tardy to proclaim
 That less than power unbounded could not tame
 That soul of Evil—which, from hell let loose,
 Had filled the astonished world with such abuse
 As boundless patience only could endure ?
 —Wide-wasted regions—cities wrapt in flame—
 Who sees, may lift a streaming eye
 To Heaven ;—who never saw, may heave a sigh ;
 But the foundation of our nature shakes,
 And with an infinite pain the spirit aches,
 When desolated countries, towns on fire,
 Are but the avowed attire
 Of warfare waged with desperate mind
 Against the life of virtue in mankind ;
 Assaulting without ruth
 The citadels of truth ;
 While the fair gardens of civility,
 By ignorance defaced,
 By violence laid waste,
 Perish without reprieve for flower or tree !

VI

A crouching purpose—a distracted will—
 Opposed to hopes that battered upon scorn,
 And to desires whose ever-waxing horn
 Not all the light of earthly power could fill ;
 Opposed to dark, deep plots of patient skill,
 And to celerities of lawless force ;
 Which, spurning God, had flung away remorse—
 What could they gain but shadows of redress ?
 —So bad proceeded propagating worse ;
 And discipline was passion's dire excess.
 Widens the fatal web, its lines extend,
 And deadlier poisons in the chalice blend.
 When will your trials teach you to be wise ?
 —O prostrate Lands, consult your agonies !

VII

No more—the guilt is banished,
 And, with the guilt, the shame is fled ;
 And, with the guilt and shame, the Woe hath vanished,
 Shaking the dust and ashes from her head !
 —No more—these lingerings of distress
 Sully the limpid stream of thankfulness.
 What robe can Gratitude employ
 So seemly as the radiant vest of Joy ?
 What steps so suitable as those that move
 In prompt obedience to spontaneous measures
 Of glory, and felicity, and love,
 Surrendering the whole heart to sacred pleasures ?

VIII

O Britain ! dearer far than life is dear,
 If one there be
 Of all thy progeny
 Who can forget thy prowess, never more
 Be that ungrateful Son allowed to hear
 Thy green leaves rustle or thy torrents roar.
 As springs the lion from his den,
 As from a forest-brake
 Upstarts a glistening snake,
 The bold Arch-despot re-appeared ;—again
 Wide Europe heaves, impatient to be cast,
 With all her armed Powers,
 On that offensive soil, like waves upon a thousand shores

The trumpet blew a universal blast !
 But Thou art foremost in the field :—there stand :
 Receive the triumph destined to thy hand !
 All States have glorified themselves ;—their claims
 Are weighed by Providence, in balance even ;
 And now, in preference to the mightiest names,
 To Thee the exterminating sword is given.
 Dread mark of approbation, justly gained !
 Exalted office, worthily sustained !

IX

Preserve, O Lord ! within our hearts
 The memory of thy favour,
 That else insensibly departs,
 And loses its sweet savour !
 Lodge it within us !—as the power of light
 Lives inexhaustibly in precious gems,
 Fixed on the front of Eastern diadems,
 So shine our thankfulness for ever bright !
 What offering, what transcendent monument
 Shall our sincerity to Thee present ?
 —Not work of hands ; but trophies that may reach
 To highest Heaven—the labour of the Soul ;
 That builds, as thy unerring precepts teach,
 Upon the internal conquests made by each,
 Her hope of lasting glory for the whole.
 Yet will not heaven disown nor earth gainsay
 The outward service of this day ;
 Whether the worshippers entreat
 Forgiveness from God's mercy-seat ;
 Or thanks and praises to His throne ascend
 That He has brought our warfare to an end,
 And that we need no second victory !——
 Ha ! what a ghastly sight for man to see ;
 And to the heavenly saints in peace who dwell,
 For a brief moment, terrible ;
 But, to thy sovereign penetration, fair,
 Before whom all things are, that were,
 All judgments that have been, or e'er shall be ;
 Links in the chain of thy tranquillity !
 Along the bosom of this favoured Nation,
 Breathe Thou, this day, a vital undulation !
 Let all who do this land inherit
 Be conscious of thy moving spirit !
 Oh, 'tis a goodly Ordinance, —the sight,

Though sprung from bleeding war, is one of pure delight;
 Bless Thou the hour, or ere the hour arrive,
 When a whole people shall kneel down in prayer,
 And, at one moment, in one rapture, strive
 With lip and heart to tell their gratitude

For thy protecting care,
 Their solemn joy—praising the Eternal Lord
 For tyranny subdued,
 And for the sway of equity renewed,
 For liberty confirmed, and peace restored !

But hark—the summons !—down the placid lake
 Floats the soft cadence of the church-tower bells ;
 Bright shines the Sun, as if his beams would wake
 The tender insects sleeping in their cells ;
 Bright shines the Sun—and not a breeze to shake
 The drops that tip the melting icicles.

O, enter 'now his temple gate !

Inviting words—perchance already flung
 (As the crowd press devoutly down the aisle
 Of some old Minster's venerable pile)
 From voices into zealous passion stung,
 While the tubed engine feels the inspiring blast,
 And has begun—its clouds of sound to cast
 Forth towards empyreal Heaven,
 As if the fretted roof were riven.

Us, humbler ceremonies now await ;
 But in the bosom, with devout respect
 The banner of our joy we will erect,
 And strength of love our souls shall elevate :
 For to a few collected in his name,
 Their heavenly Father will incline an ear
 Gracious to service hallowed by its aim ;—
 Awake ! the majesty of God revere !

Go—and with foreheads meekly bowed
 Present your prayers—go—and rejoice aloud—
 The Holy One will hear !

And what, 'mid silence deep, with faith sincere,
 Ye, in your low and undisturbed estate,
 Shall simply feel and purely meditate—
 Of warnings—from the unprecedented might,
 Which, in our time, the impious have disclosed ;
 And of more arduous duties thence imposed
 Upon the future advocates of right ;

Invocation to the Earth 301

Of mysteries revealed,
And judgments unrepealed,
Of earthly revolution,
And final retribution,—
To his omniscience will appear
An offering not unworthy to find place,
On this high DAY of THANKS, before the Throne of Grace!

INVOCATION TO THE EARTH

FEBRUARY 1816¹

I

"Rest, rest, perturbed Earth!
O rest, thou doleful Mother of Mankind!"
A Spirit sang in tones more plaintive than the wind:
"From regions where no evil thing has birth
I come—thy stains to wash away,
Thy cherished fetters to unbind,
And open thy sad eyes upon a milder day.
The Heavens are thronged with martyrs that have risen
From out thy noisome prison;
The penal caverns groan
With tens of thousands rent from off the tree
Of hopeful life,—by battle's whirlwind blown
Into the deserts of Eternity.
Unpitied havoc! Victims unlamented!
But not on high, where madness is resented,
And murder causes some sad tears to flow,
Though, from the widely-sweeping blow,
The choirs of Angels spread, triumphantly augmented.

II

"False Parent of Mankind!
Obdurate, proud, and blind,
I sprinkle thee with soft celestial dews,
Thy lost, maternal heart to re-infuse!
Scattering this far-fetched moisture from my wings,
Upon the act a blessing I implore,
Of which the rivers in their secret springs,
The rivers stained so oft with human gore,
Are conscious;—may the like return no more!
May Discord—for a Seraph's care
Shall be attended with a bolder prayer—

¹ Composed immediately after the "Thanksgiving Ode," to which it may be considered as a second part.

May she, who once disturbed the seats of bliss
 These mortal spheres above,
 Be chained for ever to the black abyss.
 And thou, O rescued Earth, by peace and love,
 And merciful desires, thy sanctity approve ! ”
 The Spirit ended his mysterious rite,
 And the pure vision closed in darkness infinite.

ODE

I

IMAGINATION—ne'er before content,
 But aye ascending, restless in her pride
 From all that martial feats could yield
 To her desires, or to her hopes present—
 Stooped to the Victory, on that Belgic field,
 Achieved, this closing deed magnificent,
 And with the embrace was satisfied.
 —Fly, ministers of Fame,
 With every help that ye from earth and heaven may claim !
 Bear through the world these tidings of delight !
 —Hours, Days, and Months, *have* borne them in the sight
 Of mortals, hurrying like a sudden shower
 That landward stretches from the sea,
 The morning's splendours to devour ;
 But this swift travel scorns the company
 Of irksome change, or threats from saddening power.
 —*The shock is given—the Adversaries bleed—*
Lo, Justice triumphs ! Earth is freed !
 Joyful annunciation !—it went forth—
 It pierced the caverns of the sluggish North—
 It found no barrier on the ridge
 Of Andes—frozen gulphs became its bridge—
 The vast Pacific gladdens with the freight—
 Upon the Lakes of Asia 'tis bestowed—
 The Arabian desert shapes a willing road
 Across her burning breast,
 For this refreshing incense from the West !—
 —Where snakes and lions breed,
 Where towns and cities thick as stars appear,
 Wherever fruits are gathered, and where'er
 The upturned soil receives the hopeful seed—
 While the Sun rules, and cross the shades of night—
 The unwearied arrow hath pursued its flight !
 The eyes of good men thankfully give heed,

And in its sparkling progress read
Of virtue crowned with glory's deathless meed :
Tyrants exult to hear of kingdoms won,
And slaves are pleased to learn that mighty feats are done ;
Even the proud Realm, from whose distracted borders
This messenger of good was launched in air,
France, humbled France, amid her wild disorders,
Feels, and hereafter shall the truth declare,
That she too lacks not reason to rejoice,
And utter England's name with sadly-plausive voice.

II

O genuine glory, pure renown !
And well might it beseech that mighty Town
Into whose bosom earth's best treasures flow,
To whom all persecuted men retreat ;
If a new Temple lift her votive brow
High on the shore of silver Thames—to greet
The peaceful guest advancing from afar.
Bright be the Fabric, as a star
Fresh risen, and beautiful within !—there meet
Dependence infinite, proportion just ;
A Pile that Grace approves, and Time can trust
With his most sacred wealth, heroic dust.

III

But if the valiant of this land
In reverential modesty demand,
That all observance, due to them, be paid
Where their serene progenitors are laid ;
Kings, warriors, high-souled poets, saintlike sages,
England's illustrious sons of long, long ages ;
Be it not unordained that solemn rites,
Within the circuit of those Gothic walls,
Shall be performed at pregnant intervals ;
Commemoration holy that unites
The living generations with the dead ;
By the deep soul-moving sense
Of religious eloquence,—
By visual pomp, and by the tie
Of sweet and threatening harmony ;
Soft notes, awful as the omen
Of destructive tempests coming,
And escaping from that sadness
Into elevated gladness ;

While the white-robed choir attendant,
 Under mouldering banners pendant,
 Provoke all potent symphonies to raise
 Songs of victory and praise,
 For them who bravely stood unhurt, or bled
 With medicable wounds, or found their graves
 Upon the battle field, or under ocean's waves ;
 Or were conducted home in single state,
 And long procession—there to lie,
 Where their sons' sons, and all posterity,
 Unheard by them, their deeds shall celebrate !

IV

Nor will the God of peace and love
 Such martial service disapprove.
 He guides, the Pestilence—the cloud
 Of locusts travels on his breath ;
 The region that in hope was ploughed
 His drought consumes, his mildew taints with death ;
 He springs the hushed Volcano's mine,
 He puts the Earthquake on her still design,
 Darkens the sun, hath bade the forest sink,
 And, drinking towns and cities, still can drink
 Cities and towns—'tis Thou—the work is Thine !—
 The fierce Tornado sleeps within thy courts—
 He hears the word—he flies—
 And navies perish in their ports ;
 For Thou art angry with thine enemies !
 For these, and mourning for our errors,
 And sins, that point their terrors,
 We bow our heads before Thee, and we laud
 And magnify thy name, Almighty God !
 But Man is thy most awful instrument,
 In working out a pure intent ;
 Thou cloth'st the wicked in their dazzling mail,
 And for thy righteous purpose they prevail ;
 Thine arm from peril guards the coasts
 Of them who in thy laws delight :
 Thy presence turns the scale of doubtful fight,
 Tremendous God of battles, Lord of Hosts !

V

Forbear :—to Thee—
 Father and Judge of all, with fervent tongue
 But in a gentler strain

Of contemplation, by no sense of wrong,
 (Too quick and keen) incited to disdain
 Of pity pleading from the heart in vain—
 To THEE—To THEE—

Just God of christianised Humanity
 Shall praises be poured forth, and thanks ascend
 That Thou hast brought our warfare to an end,
 And that we need no second victory !
 Blest, above measure blest,
 If on thy love our Land her hopes shall rest,
 And all the Nations labour to fulfil
 Thy law, and live henceforth in peace, in pure good will.

(1816)

ODE

————— Carmina possumus
 Donare, et pretium dicere munerì.
 Non incisa notis marmora publicis,
 Per quæ spiritus et vita redit bonis
 Post mortem ducibus
 ————— clarius indicant
 Laudes, quam ————— Pierides ; neque,
 Si chartæ sileant quod bene feceris,
 Mercedem tuleris. ———— HOR. Car. 8, lib. 4.

I

WHEN the soft hand of sleep had closed the latch
 On the tired household of corporeal sense,
 And Fancy, keeping unreluctant watch,
 Was free her choicest favours to dispense ;
 I saw, in wondrous perspective displayed,
 A landscape more august than happiest skill
 Of pencil ever clothed with light and shade ;
 An intermingled pomp of vale and hill,
 City, and naval stream, suburban grove,
 And stately forest where the wild deer rove ;
 Nor wanted lurking hamlet, dusky towns,
 And scattered rural farms of aspect bright ;
 And, here and there, between the pastoral downs,
 The azure sea upswelled upon the sight.
 Fair prospect, such as Britain only shows !
 But not a living creature could be seen
 Through its wide circuit, that, in deep repose,
 And, even to sadness, lonely and serene,
 Lay hushed ; till—through a portal in the sky
 Brighter than brightest loop-hole, in a storm,
 Opening before the sun's triumphant eye—
 Issued, to sudden view, a

Earthward it glided with a swift descent :
 Saint George himself this Visitant must be ;
 And, ere a thought could ask on what intent
 He sought the regions of Humanity,
 A thrilling voice was heard, that vivified
 City and field and flood ;—aloud it cried—

“ Though from my celestial home,
 Like a Champion, armed I come ;
 On my helm the dragon crest,
 And the red cross on my breast ;
 I, the Guardian of this Land,
 Speak not now of toilsome duty ;
 Well obeyed was that command—
 Whence bright days of festive beauty ;
 Haste, Virgins, haste !—the flowers which summer gave
 Have perished in the field ;
 But the green thickets plenteously shall yield
 Fit garlands for the brave,
 That will be welcome, if by you entwined ;
 Haste, Virgins, haste ; and you, ye Matrons grave,
 Go forth with rival youthfulness of mind,
 And gather what ye find
 Of hardy laurel and wild holly boughs—
 To deck your stern Defenders' modest brows !
 Such simple gifts prepare,
 Though they have gained a worthier meed ;
 And in due time shall share
 Those palms and amaranthine wreaths
 Unto their martyred Countrymen decreed,
 In realms where everlasting freshness breathes ! ”

II

And lo ! with crimson banners proudly streaming,
 And upright weapons innocently gleaming,
 Along the surface of a spacious plain
 Advance in order the redoubted Bands,
 And there receive green chaplets from the hands
 Of a fair female train—
 Maids and Matrons, dight
 In robes of dazzling white ;
 While from the crowd bursts forth a rapturous noise
 By the cloud-capt hills retorted ;
 And a throng of rosy boys
 In loose fashion tell their joys ;
 And grey-haired sires, on staffs supported,

Look round, and by their smiling seem to say,
Thus strives a grateful Country to display
The mighty debt which nothing can repay !

III

Anon before my sight a palace rose
Built of all precious substances,—so pure
And exquisite, that sleep alone bestows
Ability like splendour to endure :
Entered, with streaming thousands, through the gate,
I saw the banquet spread beneath a Dome of state,
A lofty Dome, that dared to emulate
The heaven of sable night
With starry lustre ; yet had power to throw
Solemn effulgence, clear as solar light,
Upon a princely company below,
While the vault rang with choral harmony,
Like some Nymph-haunted grot beneath the roaring sea.
—No sooner ceased that peal, than on the verge
Of exultation hung a dirge

from a soft and lonely instrument,
That kindled recollections
Of agonised affections ;
And, though some tears the strain attended,
The mournful passion ended
In peace of spirit, and sublime content !

IV

But garlands wither ; festal shows depart,
Like dreams themselves ; and sweetest sound—
(Albeit of effect profound)

It was—and it is gone !

Victorious England ! bid the silent Art
Reflect, in glowing hues that shall not fade,
Those high achievements ; even as she arrayed
With second life the deed of Marathon

Upon Athenian walls ;
So may she labour for thy civic halls
And be the guardian spaces
Of consecrated places,
As nobly graced by Sculpture's patient toil ;
And let imperishable Columns rise
Fixed in the depths of this courageous soil
Expressive signals of a glorious strife,
And competent to shed a spark divine
Into the torpid breast of daily life ;—

Records on which, for pleasure of all eyes,
 The morning sun may shine
 With gratulation thoroughly benign !

And ye, Pierian Sisters, sprung from Jove
 And sage Mnemosyne,—full long debarred
 From your first mansions, exiled all too long
 From many a hallowed stream and grove,
 Dear native regions where ye wont to rove,
 Chanting for patriot heroes the reward
 Of never-dying song !

Now (for, though Truth descending from above
 The Olympian summit hath destroyed for aye
 Your kindred Deities, Ye live and move,
 Spared for obeisance from perpetual love
 For privilege redeemed of godlike sway)
 Now, on the margin of some spotless fountain,
 Or top serene of unmolested mountain,
 Strike audibly the noblest of your lyres,
 And for a moment meet the soul's desires !
 That I, or some more favoured Bard, may hear
 What ye, celestial Maids ! have often sung
 Of Britain's acts,—may catch it with rapt ear,
 And give the treasure to our British tongue !
 So shall the characters of that proud page
 Support their mighty theme from age to age ;
 And, in the desert places of the earth,
 When they to future empires have given birth,
 So shall the people gather and believe
 The bold report, transferred to every clime ;
 And the whole world, not envious but admiring,
 And to the like aspiring,

Own—that the progeny of this fair Isle
 Had power as lofty actions to achieve
 As were performed in man's heroic prime ;
 Nor wanted, when their fortitude had held
 Its even tenor, and the foe was quelled,
 A corresponding virtue to beguile
 The hostile purpose of wide-wasting Time—
 That not in vain they laboured to secure,
 For their great deeds, perpetual memory,
 And fame as largely spread as land and sea,
 By Works of spirit high and passion pure !

ODE

I

Who rises on the banks of Seine,
 And binds her temples with the civic wreath?
 What joy to read the promise of her mien!
 How sweet to rest her wide-spread wings beneath!
 But they are ever playing,
 And twinkling in the light,
 And, if a breeze be straying,
 That breeze she will invite;
 And stands on tiptoe, conscious she is fair,
 And calls a look of love into her face,
 And spreads her arms, as if the general air
 Alone could satisfy her wide embrace.
 —Melt, Principalities, before her melt!
 Her love ye hailed—her wrath have felt!
 But She through many a change of form hath gone,
 And stands amidst you now an armèd creature,
 Whose panoply is not a thing put on,
 But the live scales of a portentous nature;
 That, having forced its way from birth to birth,
 Stalks round—abhorred by Heaven, a terror to the Earth!

II

I marked the breathings of her dragon crest;
 My Soul, a sorrowful interpreter,
 In many a midnight vision bowed
 Before the ominous aspect of her spear;
 Whether the mighty beam, in scorn upheld,
 Threatened her foes,—or, pompously at rest,
 Seemed to bisect her orbèd shield,
 As stretches a blue bar of solid cloud
 Across the setting sun and all the fiery west.

III

So did she daunt the Earth, and God defy!
 And, wheresoe'er she spread her sovereignty,
 Pollution tainted all that was most pure.
 —Have we not known—and live we not to tell—
 That Justice seemed to hear her final knell?
 Faith buried deeper in her own deep breast
 Her stores, and sighed to find them insecure!
 And Hope was maddened by the drops that fell
 From shades, her chosen place of short-lived rest.

310 The French Army in Russia

Shame followed shame, and woe supplanted woe—
Is this the only change that time can show?
How long shall vengeance sleep? Ye patient Heavens, how
long?

—Infirm ejaculation! from the tongue
Of Nations wanting virtue to be strong
Up to the measure of accorded might,
And daring not to feel the majesty of right!

IV

Weak Spirits are there—who would ask,
Upon the pressure of a painful thing,
The lion's sinews, or the eagle's wing;
Or let their wishes loose, in forest-glade,
Among the lurking powers
Of herbs and lowly flowers,
Or seek, from saints above, miraculous aid—
That Man may be accomplished for a task
Which his own nature hath enjoined;—and why?
If, when that interference hath relieved him,
He must sink down to languish
In worse than former helplessness—and lie
Till the caves roar,—and, imbecility
Again engendering anguish,
The same weak wish returns, that had before deceived him.

But Thou, supreme Disposer! may'st not speed
The course of things, and change the creed
Which hath been held aloft before men's sight
Since the first framing of societies,
Whether, as bards have told in ancient song,
Built up by soft seducing harmonies;
Or prest together by the appetite,
And by the power, of wrong.

(1816)

THE FRENCH ARMY IN RUSSIA, 1812-13

I

HUMANITY, delighting to behold
A fond reflection of her own decay,
Hath painted Winter like a traveller old,
Propped on a staff, and, through the sullen day,
In hooded mantle, limping o'er the plain,
As though his weakness were disturbed by pain:

The French Army in Russia 311

Or, if a juster fancy should allow
An undisputed symbol of command,
The chosen sceptre is a withered bough,
Infirmly grasped within a palsied hand.
These emblems suit the helpless and forlorn ;
But mighty Winter the device shall scorn.

For he it was—dread Winter ! who beset,
Flinging round van and rear his ghastly net,
That host, when from the regions of the Pole
They shrunk, insane ambition's barren goal—
That host, as huge and strong as e'er defied
Their God, and placed their trust in human pride !
As fathers persecute rebellious sons,
He smote the blossoms of their warrior youth ;
He called on Frost's inexorable tooth
Life to consume in Manhood's firmest hold ;
Nor spared the reverend blood that feebly runs ;
For why—unless for liberty enrolled
And sacred home—ah ! why should hoary Age be bold ?

Fleet the Tartar's reinless steed,
But fleetier far the pinions of the Wind,
Which from Siberian caves the Monarch freed,
And sent him forth, with squadrons of his kind,
And bade the Snow their ample backs bestride,

And to the battle ride.

No pitying voice commands a halt,
No courage can repel the dire assault ;
Distracted, spiritless, benumbed, and blind,
Whole legions sink—and, in one instant, find
Burial and death : look for them—and descry,
When morn returns, beneath the clear blue sky,
A soundless waste, a trackless vacancy !

II

YE Storms, resound the praises of your King !
And ye mild Seasons—in a sunny clime,
Midway on some high hill, while father Time
Looks on delighted—meet in festal ring,
And loud and long of Winter's triumph sing !
Sing ye, with blossoms crowned, and fruits, and flowers,
Of Winter's breath surcharged with sleety showers,
And the dire flapping of his hoary wing !
Knit the blithe dance upon the soft green grass ;
With feet, hands, eyes, looks, lips, report your gain ;

312 The Heights of Hochheim

Whisper it to the billows of the main,
And to the ærial zephyrs as they pass,
That old decrepit Winter—*He* hath slain
That Host, which rendered all your bounties vain!

III

By Moscow self-devoted to a blaze
Of dreadful sacrifice; by Russian blood
Lavished in fight with desperate hardihood;
The unfeeling Elements no claim shall raise
To rob our Human-nature of just praise
For what she did and suffered. Pledges sure
Of a deliverance absolute and pure
She gave, if Faith might tread the beaten ways
Of Providence. But now did the Most High
Exalt his still small voice;—to quell that Host
Gathered his power, a manifest ally;
He, whose heaped waves confounded the proud boast
Of Pharaoh, said to Famine, Snow, and Frost,
“Finish the strife by deadliest victory!”
(1816)

THE GERMANS ON THE HEIGHTS OF HOCHHEIM

ABRUPTLY paused the strife;—the field throughout
Resting upon his arms each warrior stood,
Checked in the very act and deed of blood,
With breath suspended, like a listening scout.
O Silence! thou wert mother of a shout
That through the texture of yon azure dome
Cleaves its glad way, a cry of harvest home
Uttered to Heaven in ecstasy devout!
The barrier Rhine hath flashed, through battle-smoke,
On men who gaze heart-smitten by the view,
As if all Germany had felt the shock!
—Fly, wretched Gauls! ere they the charge renew
Who have seen—themselves now casting off the yoke—
The unconquerable Stream his course pursue.
(1816)

SIEGE OF VIENNA RAISED BY JOHN SOBIESKI

FEBRUARY 1816

OH, for a kindling touch from that pure flame
Which ministered, erewhile, to a sacrifice

The Battle of Waterloo 313

Of gratitude, beneath Italian skies,
 In words like these : ' Up, Voice of song ! proclaim
 Thy saintly rapture with celestial aim :
 For lo ! the Imperial City stands released
 From bondage threatened by the embattled East,
 And Christendom respires ; from guilt and shame
 Redeemed, from miserable fear set free
 By one day's feat, one mighty victory.
 —Chant the Deliverer's praise in every tongue !
 The cross shall spread, the crescent hath waxed dim ;
 He conquering, as in joyful Heaven is sung,
 HE CONQUERING THROUGH GOD, AND GOD BY HIM.'¹

OCCASIONED BY THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO FEBRUARY 1816

INTREPID sons of Albion ! not by you
 Is life despised ; ah no, the spacious earth
 Ne'er saw a race who held, by right of birth,
 So many objects to which love is due :
 Ye slight not life—to God and Nature true ;
 But death, becoming death, is dearer far,
 When duty bids you bleed in open war :
 Hence hath your prowess quelled that impious crew.
 Heroes !—for instant sacrifice prepared ;
 Yet filled with ardour and on triumph bent
 'Mid direst shocks of mortal accident—
 To you who fell, and you whom slaughter spared
 To guard the fallen, and consummate the event,
 Your Country rears this sacred Monument !²

II

THE Bard—whose soul is meek as dawning day,
 Yet trained to judgments righteously severe
 Fervid, yet conversant with holy fear,
 As recognising one Almighty sway :
 He—whose experienced eye can pierce the array
 Of past events ; to whom, in vision clear,
 The aspiring heads of future things appear,
 Like mountain-tops whose mists have rolled away—
 Assailed from all encumbrance of our time,³
 He only, if such breathe, in strains devout

¹ See Filicaja's ode.

² The last six lines intended for an Inscription.

³ "From all this world's encumbrance did himself assoil."—*Spenser*.

314 'Emperors and Kings'

Shall comprehend this victory sublime ;
 Shall worthily rehearse the hideous rout,
 The triumph hail, which from their peaceful clime
 Angels might welcome with a choral shout !

"EMPERORS AND KINGS, HOW OFT HAVE TEMPLES RUNG "

EMPERORS and Kings, how oft have temples rung
 With impious thanksgiving, the Almighty's scorn !
 How oft above their altars have been hung
 Trophies that led the good and wise to mourn
 Triumphant wrong, battle of battle born,
 And sorrow that to fruitless sorrow clung !
 Now, from Heaven-sanctioned victory, Peace is sprung ;
 In this firm hour Salvation lifts her horn.
 Glory to arms ! But, conscious that the nerve
 Of popular reason, long mistrusted, freed
 Your thrones, ye Powers, from duty fear to swerve !
 Be just, be grateful ; nor, the oppressor's creed
 Reviving, heavier chastisement deserve
 Than ever forced unpitied hearts to bleed.
 (1816)

FEELINGS OF A FRENCH ROYALIST, ON THE DISINTERMENT OF THE REMAINS OF THE DUKE D'ENGHIEN

DEAR Reliques ! from a pit of vilest mould
 Uprisen—to lodge among ancestral kings ;
 And to inflict shame's salutary stings
 On the remorseless hearts of men grown old
 In a blind worship ; men perversely bold
 Even to this hour,—yet, some shall now forsake
 Their monstrous Idol if the dead e'er spake,
 To warn the living ; if truth were ever told
 By aught redeemed out of the hollow grave :
 O murdered Prince ! meek, loyal, pious, brave !
 The power of retribution once was given :
 But 'tis a rueful thought that willow bands
 So often tie the thunder-wielding hands
 Of Justice sent to earth from highest Heaven !

(1816)

TRANSLATION OF PART OF THE FIRST
BOOK OF THE *ÆNEID*¹

BUT Cytherea, studious to invent
Arts yet untried, upon new counsels bent,
Resolves that Cupid, changed in form and face
To young Ascanius, should assume his place ;
Present the maddening gifts, and kindle heat
Of passion at the bosom's inmost seat.
She dreads the treacherous house, the double tongue ;
She burns, she frets—by Juno's rancour stung ;
The calm of night is powerless to remove
These cares, and thus she speaks to wingèd Love :
“ O son, my strength, my power ! who dost despise
(What, save thyself, none dares through earth and skies)
The giant-quelling bolts of Jove, I flee,
O son, a suppliant to thy deity !
What perils meet *Æneas* in his course,
How Juno's hate with unrelenting force
Pursues thy brother—this to thee is known ;
And oft-times hast thou made my griefs thine own.
Him now the generous Dido by soft chains
Of bland entreaty at her court detains ;
Junonian hospitalities prepare
Such apt occasion that I dread a snare.
Hence, ere some hostile God can intervene,
Would I, by previous wiles, inflame the queen
With passion for *Æneas*, such strong love
That at my beck, mine only, she shall move.
Hear, and assist ;—the father's mandate calls
His young Ascanius to the Tyrian walls ;
He comes, my dear delight,—and costliest things
Preserved from fire and flood for presents brings.
Him will I take, and in close covert keep,
Mid groves Idalian, lulled to gentle sleep,
Or on Cythera's far-sequestered steep,
That he may neither know what hope is mine,
Nor by his presence traverse the design.
Do thou, but for a single night's brief space,
Dissemble ; be that boy in form and face !

¹ Having been displeased in modern translations with the additions of incongruous matter, I began to translate with a resolve to keep clear of that fault, by adding nothing ; but I became convinced that a spirited translation can scarcely be accomplished in the English language without admitting a principle of compensation.

316 First Book of the Æneid

And when enraptured Dido shall receive
Thee to her arms, and kisses interweave
With many a fond embrace, while joy runs high,
And goblets crown the proud festivity,
Instil thy subtle poison, and inspire,
At every touch, an unsuspected fire."

Love, at the word, before his mother's sight
Puts off his wings, and walks, with proud delight,
Like young Iulus ; but the gentlest dews
Of slumber Venus sheds, to circumfuse
The true Ascanius steeped in placid rest ;
Then wafts him, cherished on her careful breast,
Through upper air to an Idalian glade,
Where he on soft *amaracus* is laid,
With breathing flowers embraced, and fragrant shade.
But Cupid, following cheerily his guide
Achates, with the gifts to Carthage hied ;
And, as the hall he entered, there, between
The sharers of her golden couch, was seen
Reclined in festal pomp the Tyrian queen.
The Trojans, too (*Æneas* at their head),
On couches lie, with purple overspread :
Meantime in canisters is heaped the bread,
Pellucid water for the hands is borne,
And napkins of smooth texture, finely shorn.
Within are fifty handmaids, who prepare,
As they in order stand, the dainty fare ;
And fume the household deities with store
Of odorous incense ; while a hundred more
Matched with an equal number of like age,
But each of manly sex, a docile page,
Marshal the banquet, giving with due grace
To cup or viand its appointed place.
The Tyrians rushing in, an eager band,
Their painted couches seek, obedient to command.
They look with wonder on the gifts—they gaze
Upon Iulus, dazzled with the rays
That from his ardent countenance are flung,
And charmed to hear his *strutting* *tor* . . .
Nor pass unpraised the *round* *which* *the* *yellow* *flowers* *and* *wandering* *foliage* *twine*.

But chiefly Dido, to the coming ill
Devoted, strives in vain her vast desires to fill ;

She views the gifts ; upon the child then turns
Insatiable looks, and gazing burns.
To ease a father's cheated love he hung
Upon *Æneas*, and around him clung ;
Then seeks the queen ; with her his arts he tries ;
She fastens on the boy enamoured eyes,
Clasps in her arms, nor weens (O lot unblest !)
How great a God, incumbent o'er her breast,
Would fill it with his spirit. He, to please
His *Acidalian* mother, by degrees
Blots out *Sichæus*, studious to remove
The dead, by influx of a living love,
By stealthy entrance of a perilous guest,
Troubling a heart that had been long at rest.

Now when the viands were withdrawn, and ceased
The first division of the splendid feast,
While round a vacant board the chiefs recline,
Huge goblets are brought forth ; they crown the wine ;
Voices of gladness roll the walls around ;
Those gladsome voices from the courts rebound ;
From gilded rafters many a blazing light
Depends, and torches overcome the night.
The minutes fly—till, at the queen's command,
A bowl of state is offered to her hand :
Then she, as *Belus* wont, and all the line
From *Belus*, filled it to the brim with wine ;
Silence ensued. “ O *Jupiter*, whose care
Is hospitable dealing, grant my prayer !
Productive day be this of lasting joy
To *Tyrians*, and these exiles driven from *Troy* ;
A day to future generations dear !
Let *Bacchus*, donor of soul-quick'ning cheer,
Be present ; kindly *Juno*, be thou near !
And, *Tyrians*, may your choicest favours wait
Upon this hour, the bond to celebrate ! ”
She spake and shed an offering on the board ;
Then sipped the bowl whence she the wine had poured
And gave to *Bitias*, urging the prompt lord ;
He raised the bowl, and took a long deep draught ;
Then every chief in turn the beverage quaffed.

Graced with redundant hair, *Iopas* sings
The lore of *Atlas*, to resounding strings,
The labours of the Sun, the lunar wanderings ;
When human kind, and brute ; what natural powers

318 A Fact, and an Imagination

Engender lightning, whence are falling showers.
 He haunts Arcturus,—that fraternal twain
 The glittering Bears,—the Pleiads fraught with rain ;
 —Why suns in winter, shunning heaven's steep heights,
 Post seaward,—what impedes the tardy nights.
 The learned song from Tyrian hearers draws
 Loud shouts,—the Trojans echo the applause.
 —But, lengthening out the night with converse new,
 Large draughts of love unhappy Dido drew ;
 Of Priam asked, of Hector—o'er and o'er—
 What arms the son of bright Aurora wore ;—
 What steeds the car of Diomed could boast ;
 Among the leaders of the Grecian host.
 How looked Achilles, their dread paramount—
 “ But nay—the fatal wiles, O guest, recount,
 Retrace the Grecian cunning from its source,
 Your own grief and your friends ?—your wandering course ;
 For now, till this seventh summer have ye ranged
 The sea, or trod the earth, to peace estranged.”
 (1816)

A FACT, AND AN IMAGINATION

OR, CANUTE AND ALFRED, ON THE SEASHORE¹

I

THE Danish Conqueror, on his royal chair,
 Mustering a face of haughty sovereignty,
 To aid a covert purpose, cried—“ O ye
 Approaching Waters of the deep, that share
 With this green isle my fortunes, come not where
 Your Master's throne is set.”—Deaf was the Sea ;
 Her waves rolled on, respecting his decree
 Less than they heed a breath of wanton air.
 —Then Canute, rising from the invaded throne,
 Said to his servile Courtiers,—“ Poor the reach,
 The undisguised extent, of mortal sway !
 He only is a King, and he alone
 Deserves the name (this truth the billows preach)
 Whose everlasting laws, sea, earth, and heaven, obey.”

II

This just reproof the prosperous Dane
 Drew, from the influx of the main,

¹ The first and last fourteen lines of this poem each make a sonnet, and were composed as such ; but I thought that by intermediate lines they might be connected so as to make a whole. One or two expressions are taken from Milton's *History of England*.

For some whose rugged northern mouths would strain
 At oriental flattery ;
 And Canute (fact more worthy to be known)
 From that time forth did for his brows disown
 The ostentatious symbol of a crown ;
 Esteeming earthly royalty
 Contemptible as vain.

Now hear what one of elder days,
 Rich theme of England's fondest praise,
 Her darling Alfred, *might* have spoken ;
 To cheer the remnant of his host
 When he was driven from coast to coast,
 Distressed and harassed, but with mind unbroken :

III

" My faithful followers, lo ! the tide is spent
 That rose, and steadily advanced to fill
 The shores and channels, working Nature's will
 Among the mazy streams that backward went,
 And in the sluggish pools where ships are pent :
 And now, his task performed, the flood stands still,
 At the green base of many an inland hill,
 In placid beauty and sublime content !
 Such the repose that sage and hero find ;
 Such measured rest the sedulous and good
 Of humbler name ; whose souls do, like the flood
 Of Ocean, press right on ; or gently wind,
 Neither to be diverted nor withstood,
 Until they reach the bounds by Heaven assigned."
 (1816)

TO DORA

*" A little onward lend thy guiding hand
 To these dark steps, a little further on ! "*
 —What trick of memory to *my* voice hath brought
 This mournful iteration ? For though Time,
 The Conqueror, crowns the Conquered, on this brow
 Planting his favourite silver diadem,
 Nor he, nor minister of his—intent
 To run before him—hath enrolled me yet,
 Though not unmenaced, among those who lean
 Upon a living staff, with borrowed sight.
 —O my own Dora, my beloved child !
 Should that day come—but hark ! the birds salute
 The cheerful dawn, brightening for me the east ;

For me, thy natural leader, once again
Impatient to conduct thee, not as erst
A tottering infant, with compliant stoop
From flower to flower supported ; but to curb
Thy nymph-like step swift-bounding o'er the lawn,
Along the loose rocks, or the slippery verge
Of foaming torrents.—From thy orisons
Come forth ; and, while the morning air is yet
Transparent as the soul of innocent youth,
Let me, thy happy guide, now point thy way,
And now precede thee, winding to and fro,
Till we by perseverance gain the top
Of some smooth ridge, whose brink precipitous
Kindles intense desire for powers withheld
From this corporeal frame ; whereon who stands,
Is seized with strong incitement to push forth
His arms, as swimmers use, and plunge—dread thought,
For pastime plunge—into the “ abrupt abyss,”—
Where ravens spread their plummy vans, at ease !

And yet more gladly thee would I conduct
Through woods and spacious forests,—to behold
There, how the Original of human art,
Heaven-prompted Nature, measures and erects
Her temples, fearless for the stately work,
Though waves, to every breeze, its high-arched roof,
And storms the pillars rock. But we such schools
Of reverential awe will chiefly seek
In the still summer noon, while beams of light,
Reposing here, and in the aisles beyond
Traceably gliding through the dusk, recall
To mind the living presences of nuns ;
A gentle, pensive, white-robed sisterhood,
Whose saintly radiance mitigates the gloom
Of those terrestrial fabrics, where they serve,
To Christ, the Sun of righteousness, espoused.

Now also shall the page of classic lore,
To these glad eyes from bondage freed, again
Lie open ; and the book of Holy Writ,
Again unfolded, passage clear shall yield
To heights more glorious still, and into shades
More awful, where, advancing hand in hand,
We may be taught, O Darling of my care !
To calm the affections, elevate the soul,
And consecrate our lives to truth and love.

‘Inmate of a Mountain-dwelling’ 321

TO ———

ON HER FIRST ASCENT TO THE SUMMIT OF HEIVELLYN¹

INMATE of a mountain-dwelling,
Thou hast clomb aloft, and gazed
From the watch-towers of Helvellyn ;
Awed, delighted, and amazed !

Potent was the spell that bound thee
Not unwilling to obey ;
For blue Ether’s arms, flung round thee,
Stilled the pantings of dismay.

Lo ! the dwindled woods and meadows ;
What a vast abyss is there !
Lo ! the clouds, the solemn shadows,
And the glistenings—heavenly fair !

And a record of commotion
Which a thousand ridges yield ;
Ridge, and gulf, and distant ocean
Gleaming like a silver shield !

Maiden ! now take flight ;—inherit
Alps or Andes—they are thine !
With the morning’s roseate Spirit,
Sweep their length of snowy line ;

Or survey their bright dominions
In the gorgeous colours drest
Flung from off the purple pinions,
Evening spreads throughout the west !

Thine are all the coral fountains
Warbling in each sparry vault
Of the untrodden lunar mountains ;
Listen to their songs !—or halt,

To Niphates’ top invited,
Whither spiteful Satan steered ;
Or descend where the ark alighted,
When the green earth re-appeared ;

¹ Wiitten at Rydal Mount. The lady was Miss Blackett, then residing with Mr. Montagu Burgoyne at Fox-Ghyll. We were tempted to remain too long upon the mountain ; and I, imprudently, with the hope of shortening the way, led her among the crags and down a steep slope which entangled us in difficulties that were met by her with much spirit and courage.

For the power of hills is on thee,
 As was witnessed through thine eye
 Then, when old Helvellyn won thee
 To confess their majesty !

(1816)

VERNAL ODE ¹

I

BENEATH the concave of an April sky,
 When all the fields with freshest green were dight,
 Appeared, in presence of the spiritual eye
 That aids or supersedes our grosser sight,
 The form and rich habiliments of One
 Whose countenance bore resemblance to the sun,
 When it reveals, in evening majesty,
 Features half lost amid their own pure light.
 Poised like a weary cloud, in middle air
 He hung,—then floated with angelic ease
 (Softening that bright effulgence by degrees)
 Till he had reached a summit sharp and bare,
 Where oft the venturous heifer drinks the noontide breeze,
 Upon the apex of that lofty cone
 Alighted, there the Stranger stood alone ;
 Fair as a gorgeous Fabric of the east
 Suddenly raised by some enchanter's power,
 Where nothing was ; and firm as some old Tower
 Of Britain's realm, whose leafy crest
 Waves high, embellished by a gleaming shower !

II

Beneath the shadow of his purple wings
 Rested a golden harp ;—he touched the strings ;
 And, after prelude of unearthly sound
 Poured through the echoing hills around,
 He sang—

“No wintry desolations,
 Scorching blight or noxious dew,
 Affect my native habitations ;
 Buried in glory, far beyond the scope
 Of man's inquiring gaze, but to his hope

¹ Composed at Rydal Mount, to place in view the immortality of succession where immortality is denied, as far as we know, to the individual creature.

Rerum Natura tota est nusquam magis quam in minimis.—PLIN.
Nat. Hist.

Imaged, though faintly, in the hue
Profound of night's ethereal blue ;
And in the aspect of each radiant orb ;—
Some fixed, some wandering with no timid curb :
But wandering star and fixed, to mortal eye,
Blended in absolute serenity,
And free from semblance of decline ;—
Fresh as if Evening brought their natal hour,
Her darkness splendour gave, her silence power
To testify of Love and Grace divine.

III

“ What if those bright fires
Shine subject to decay,
Sons haply of extinguished sires,
Themselves to lose their light, or pass away
Like clouds before the wind,
Be thanks poured out to Him whose hand bestows,
Nightly, on human kind
That vision of endurance and repose.
—And though to every draught of vital breath
Renewed throughout the bounds of earth or ocean,
The melancholy gates of Death
Respond with sympathetic motion ;
Though all that feeds on nether air,
Howe'er magnificent or fair,
Grows but to perish, and entrust
Its ruins to their kindred dust ;
Yet, by the Almighty's ever-during care,
Her procreant vigils Nature keeps
Amid the unfathomable deeps ;
And saves the peopled fields of earth
From dread of emptiness or dearth.
Thus, in their stations, lifting tow'rd the sky
The foliaged head in cloud-like majesty,
The shadow-casting race of trees survive :
Thus, in the train of Spring, arrive
Sweet flowers ;—what living eye hath viewed
Their myriads ?—endlessly renewed,
Wherever strikes the sun's glad ray ;
Where'er the subtle waters stray ;
Wherever sportive breezes bend
Their course, or genial showers descend !
Mortals, rejoice ! the very Angels quit
Their mansions unsusceptible of change,

Amid your pleasant bowers to sit,
And through your sweet vicissitudes to range ! ”

IV

Oh, nursed at happy distance from the cares
Of a too-anxious world, mild pastoral Muse !
That, to the sparkling crown Urania wears,
And to her sister Clio's laurel wreath,
Prefer'st a garland culled from purple heath,
Or blooming thicket moist with morning dew ;
Was such bright Spectacle vouchsafed to me ?
And was it granted to the simple ear
Of thy contented Votary
Such melody to hear !
Him rather suits it, side by side with thee,
Wrapped in a fit of pleasing indolence,
While thy tired lute hangs on the hawthorn-tree,
To lie and listen—till o'er-drowsèd sense
Sinks, hardly conscious of the influence—
To the soft murmur of the vagrant Bee.
—A slender sound ! yet hoary Time
Doth to the *Soul* exalt it with the chime
Of all his years ;—a company
Of ages coming, ages gone ;
(Nations from before them sweeping,
Regions in destruction steeping,
But every awful note in unison
With that faint utterance, which tells
Of treasure sucked from buds and bells,
For the pure keeping of those waxen cells ;
Where She—a statist prudent to confer
Upon the common weal ; a warrior bold,
Radiant all over with unburnished gold,
And armed with living spear for mortal fight ;
A cunning forager
That spreads no waste ; a social builder ; one
In whom all busy offices unite
With all fine functions that afford delight—
Safe through the winter storm in quiet dwells !

V

And is She brought within the power
Of vision ?—o'er this tempting flower
Hovering until the petals stay
Her flight, and take its voice away !—

Observe each wing!—a tiny van!
 The structure of her laden thigh,
 How fragile! yet of ancestry
 Mysteriously remote and high;
 High as the imperial front of man;
 The roseate bloom on woman's cheek;
 The soaring eagle's curvèd beak;
 The white plumes of the floating swan;
 Old as the tiger's paw, the lion's mane
 Ere shaken by that mood of stern disdain
 At which the desert trembles.—Humming Bee!
 Thy sting was needless then, perchance unknown,
 The seeds of malice were not sown;
 All creatures met in peace, from fierceness free,
 And no pride blended with their dignity.
 —Tears had not broken from their source;
 Nor Anguish strayed from her Tartarean den;
 The golden years maintained a course
 Not undiversified though smooth and even;
 We were not mocked with glimpse and shadow then,
 Bright Seraphs mixed familiarly with men;
 And earth and stars composed a universal heaven!

(1817)

ODE TO LYCORIS. MAY 1817¹

I

AN age hath been when Earth was proud
 Of lustre too intense
 To be sustained; and Mortals bowed
 The front in self-defence.
 Who *then*, if Dian's crescent gleamed,
 Or Cupid's sparkling arrow streamed
 While on the wing the Urchin played,
 Could fearlessly approach the shade?
 —Enough for one soft vernal day,
 If I, a bard of ebbing time,
 And nurtured in a fickle clime,
 May haunt this hornèd bay;
 Whose amorous water multiplies
 The fitting halcyon's vivid dyes;

¹ The discerning reader, who is aware that in the poem of Ellen Irwin I was desirous of throwing the reader at once out of the old ballad, so as, if possible, to preclude a comparison between that mode of dealing with the subject and the mode I meant to adopt—may here perhaps perceive that this poem originated in the four last lines of the last stanza.

And smooths her liquid breast—to show
These swan-like specks of mountain snow,
White as the pair that slid along the plains
Of heaven, when Venus held the reins !

In youth we love the darksome lawn
Brushed by the owlet's wing ;
Then, Twilight is preferred to Dawn,
And Autumn to the Spring.
Sad fancies do we then affect,
In luxury of disrespect
To our own prodigal excess
Of too familiar happiness.
Lycoris (if such name befit
Thee, thee my life's celestial sign !)
When Nature marks the year's decline,
Be ours to welcome it ;
Pleased with the harvest hope that runs
Before the path of milder suns ;
Pleased while the sylvan world displays
Its ripeness to the feeding gaze ;
Pleased when the sullen winds resound the knell
Of the resplendent miracle.

III

But something whispers to my heart
That, as we downward tend,
Lycoris ! life requires an *art*
To which our souls must bend ;
A skill—to balance and supply ;
And, ere the flowing fount be dry,
As soon it must, a sense to sip,
Or drink, with no fastidious lip.
Then welcome, above all, the Guest
Whose smiles, diffused o'er land and sea,
Seem to recall the Deity
Of youth into the breast :
May pensive Autumn ne'er present
A claim to her disparagement !
While blossoms and the budding spray
Inspire us in our own decay ;
Still, as we nearer draw to life's dark goal,
Be hopeful Spring the favourite of the Soul !

TO LYCORIS¹

ENOUGH of climbing toil!—Ambition treads
Here, as 'mid busier scenes, ground steep and rough,
Or slippery even to peril! and each step,
As we for most uncertain recompence
Mount toward the empire of the fickle clouds,
Each weary step, dwarfing the world below,
Induces, for its old familiar sights,
Unacceptable feelings of contempt,
With wonder mixed—that Man could e'er be tied,
In anxious bondage, to such nice array
And formal fellowship of petty things!
—Oh! 'tis the *heart* that magnifies this life,
Making a truth and beauty of her own;
And moss-grown alleys, circumscribing shades,
And gurgling rills, assist her in the work
More efficaciously than realms outspread,
As in a map, before the adventurer's gaze—
Ocean and Earth contending for regard.

The umbrageous woods are left—how far beneath!
But lo! where darkness seems to guard the mouth
Of yon wild cave, whose jagged brows are fringed
With flaccid threads of ivy, in the still
And sultry air, depending motionless.
Yet cool the space within, and not uncheered
(As whoso enters shall ere long perceive)
By stealthy influx of the timid day
Mingling with night, such twilight to compose
As Numa loved; when, in the Egerian grot,
From the sage Nymph appearing at his wish,
He gained whate'er a regal mind might ask,
Or need, of counsel breathed through lips divine.

Long as the heat shall rage, let that dim cave
Protect us, there deciphering as we may
Diluvian records; or the sighs of Earth
Interpreting; or counting for old Time
His minutes, by reiterated drops,
Audible tears, from some invisible source
That deepens upon fancy—more and more
Drawn toward the centre whence those sighs creep forth
To awe the lightness of humanity:

¹ This as well as the preceding and the two that follow were composed in front of Rydal Mount and during my walks in the neighbourhood.

The Longest Day

Or, shutting up thyself within thyself,
 There let me see thee sink into a mood
 Of gentler thought, protracted till thine eye
 Be calm as water when the winds are gone,
 And no one can tell whither. Dearest Friend!
 We two have known such happy hours together
 That, were power granted to replace them (fetched
 From out the pensive shadows where they lie)
 In the first warmth of their original sunshine,
 Loth should I be to use it : passing sweet
 Are the domains of tender memory !
 (1817)

THE LONGEST DAY

ADDRESSED TO MY DAUGHTER¹

LET us quit the leafy arbour,
 And the torrent murmuring by ;
 For the sun is in his harbour,
 Weary of the open sky.

Evening now unbinds the fetters
 Fashioned by the glowing light ;
 All that breathe are thankful debtors
 To the harbinger of night.

Yet by some grave thoughts attended
 Eve renews her calm career :
 For the day that now is ended,
 Is the longest of the year.

Dora ! sport, as now thou sportest,
 On this platform, light and free ;
 Take thy bliss, while longest, shortest,
 Are indifferent to thee !

Who would check the happy feeling
 That inspires the linnet's song ?
 Who would stop the swallow, wheeling
 On her pinions swift and strong ?

Yet at this impressive season,
 Words which tenderness can speak
 From the truths of homely reason,
 Might exalt the loveliest cheek ;

¹ Suggested by the sight of my daughter (Dora) playing in front of Rydal Mount.

The Longest Day

329.

And, while shades to shades succeeding
Steal the landscape from the sight,
I would urge this moral pleading,
Last forerunner of "Good night!"

SUMMER ebbs ;—each day that follows
Is a reflux from on high,
Tending to the darksome hollows
Where the frosts of winter lie.

He who governs the creation
In his providence, assigned
Such a gradual declination
To the life of human kind.

Yet we mark it not ;—fruits redden,
Fresh flowers blow, as flowers have blown,
And the heart is loth to deaden
Hopes that she so long hath known.

Be thou wiser, youthful Maiden !
And when thy decline shall come,
Let not flowers, or boughs fruit-laden,
Hide the knowledge of thy doom.

Now, even now, ere wrapped in slumber,
Fix thine eyes upon the sea
That absorbs time, space, and number ;
Look thou to Eternity !

Follow thou the flowing river
On whose breast are thither borne
All deceived, and each deceiver,
Through the gates of night and morn ,

Through the year's successive portals ;
Through the bounds which many a star
Marks, not mindless of frail mortals
When his light returns from far.

Thus when thou with Time hast travelled
Toward the mighty gulf of things,
And the mazy stream unravelled
With thy best imaginings ;

Think, if thou on beauty leanest,
Think how pitiful that stay,
Did not virtue give the meanest
Charms superior to decay.

330 Hint from the Mountains

Duty, like a strict preceptor,
Sometimes frowns, or seems to frown ;
Choose her thistle for thy sceptre,
While youth's roses are thy crown.

Grasp it,—if thou shrink and tremble,
Fairest damsel of the green,
Thou wilt lack the only symbol
That proclaims a genuine queen ;

And ensures those palms of honour
Which selected spirits wear,
Bending low before the Donor,
Lord of heaven's unchanging year !

(1817)

HINT FROM THE MOUNTAINS

FOR CERTAIN POLITICAL PRETENDERS¹

"Who but hails the sight with pleasure
When the wings of genius rise,
Their ability to measure
With great enterprise ;
But in man was ne'er such daring
As yon Hawk exhibits, pairing
His brave spirit with the war in
The stormy skies !"

"Mark him, how his power he uses,
Lays it by, at will resumes !
Mark, ere for his haunt he chooses
Clouds and utter glooms !
There, he wheels in downward mazes ;
Sunward now his flight he raises,
Catches fire, as seems, and blazes
With uninjured plumes !"—

ANSWER

"Stranger, 'tis no act of courage
Which aloft thou dost discern ;
No bold *bird* gone forth to forage
'Mid the tempest stern ;

¹ Bunches of fern may often be seen wheeling about in the wind as here described. The particular bunch that suggested these verses was noticed in the Pass of Dunmail Raise.

The Pass of Kirkstone

331

But such mockery as the nations
See, when public perturbations
Lift men from their native stations
Like yon TUFT OF FERN ;
“ Such it is ; the aspiring creature
Soaring on undaunted wing,
(So you fancied) is by nature
A dull helpless thing,
Dry and withered, light and yellow ;—
That to be the tempest's fellow !
Wait—and you shall see how hollow
Its endeavouring ! ”

(1817)

THE PASS OF KIRKSTONE¹

I

WITHIN the mind strong fancies work.
A deep delight the bosom thrills
Oft as I pass along the fork
Of these fraternal hills :
Where, save the rugged road, we find
No appanage of human kind,
Nor hint of man ; if stone or rock
Seem not his handywork to mock
By something cognizably shaped ;
Mockery—or model roughly hewn,
And left as if by earthquake strewn,
Or from the Flood escaped :
Altars for Druid service fit ;
(But where no fire was ever lit,
Unless the glow-worm to the skies
Thence offer nightly sacrifice)
Wrinkled Egyptian monument ;
Green moss-grown tower ; or hoary tent ;
Tents of a camp that never shall be razed—
On which four thousand years have gazed !

II

Ye plough-shares sparkling on the slopes !
Ye snow-white lambs that trip
Imprisoned 'mid the formal props
Of restless ownership !

¹ Written at Rydal Mount. Thoughts and feelings of many walks in all weathers, by day and night, over this Pass, alone and with beloved friends.

The Pass of Kirkstone

Ye trees, that may to-morrow fall
 To feed the insatiate Prodigal !
 Lawns, houses, chattels, groves, and fields,
 All that the fertile valley shields ;
 Wages of folly—baits of crime,
 Of life's uneasy game the stake,
 Playthings that keep the eyes awake
 Of drowsy, dotard Time ;—
 O care ! O guilt !—O vales and plains,
 Here, 'mid his own unvexed domains,
 A Genius dwells, that can subdue
 At once all memory of You,—
 Most potent when mists veil the sky,
 Mists that distort and magnify ;
 While the coarse rushes, to the sweeping breeze,
 Sigh forth their ancient melodies !

III

List to those shriller notes !—*that* march
 Perchance was on the blast,
 When, through this Height's inverted arch,
 Rome's earliest legion passed !
 —They saw, adventurously impelled,
 And older eyes than theirs beheld,
 This block—and yon, whose church-like frame
 Gives to this savage Pass its name.
 Aspiring Road ! that lov'st to hide
 Thy daring in a vapoury bourn,
 Not seldom may the hour return
 When thou shalt be my guide :
 And I (as all men may find cause,
 When life is at a weary pause,
 And they have panted up the hill
 Of duty with reluctant will)
 Be thankful, even though tired and faint,
 For the rich bounties of constraint ;
 Whence oft invigorating transports flow
 That choice lacked courage to bestow !

IV

My Soul was grateful for delight
 That wore a threatening brow ;
 A veil is lifted—can she slight
 The scene that opens now ?
 Though habitation none appear,
 The greenness tells, man must be there ;

Lament of Mary Queen of Scots 333

The shelter—that the perspective
Is of the clime in which we live ;
Where Toil pursues his daily round ;
Where Pity sheds sweet tears—and Love,
In woodbine bower or birchen grove,
Inflicts his tender wound.
—Who comes not hither ne'er shall know
How beautiful the world below ;
Nor can he guess how lightly leaps
The brook adown the rocky steeps.
Farewell, thou desolate Domain !
Hope, pointing to the cultured plain,
Carols like a shepherd-boy ;
And who is she?—Can that be Joy !
Who, with a sunbeam for her guide,
Smoothly skims the meadows wide ;
While Faith, from yonder opening cloud,
To hill and vale proclaims aloud,
“Whate'er the weak may dread, the wicked dare,
Thy lot, O Man, is good, thy portion, fair !”

(18:7)

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

ON THE EVE OF A NEW YEAR ¹

SMILE of the Moon !—for so I name
That silent greeting from above ;
A gentle flash of light that came
From her whom drooping captives love ;
Or art thou of still higher birth ?
Thou that didst part the clouds of earth,
My torpor to reprove !

II

Bright boon of pitying Heaven !—alas,
I may not trust thy placid cheer !
Pondering that Time to-night will pass
The threshold of another year ;

¹ This arose out of a flash of moonlight that struck the ground when I was approaching the steps that lead from the garden at Rydal Mount to the front of the house. “From her sunk eye a stagnant tear stole forth” is taken, with some loss, from a discarded poem, “The Convict,” in which occurred, when he was discovered lying in the cell, these lines :—

“But now he upraises the deep-sunken eye,
The motion unsettles a tear ;
The silence of sorrow it seems to supply
And asks of me—why I am here.”

334 Lament of Mary Queen of Scots

For years to me are sad and dull ;
My very moments are too full
Of hopelessness and fear.

III

And yet, the soul-awakening gleam,
That struck perchance the farthest cone
Of Scotland's rocky wilds, did seem
To visit me, and me alone ;
Me, unapproached by any friend,
Save those who to my sorrows lend
Tears due unto their own.

IV

To-night the church-tower bells will ring
Through these wild realms a festive peal ;
To the new year a welcoming ;
A tuneful offering for the weal
Of happy millions lulled in sleep ;
While I am forced to watch and weep,
By wounds that may not heal.

V

Born all too high, by wedlock raised
Still higher—to be cast thus low !
Would that mine eyes had never gazed
On aught of more ambitious show
Than the sweet flowerets of the fields
—It is my royal state that yields
This bitterness of woe.

VI

Yet how?—for I, if there be truth
In the world's voice, was passing fair ;
And beauty, for confiding youth,
Those shocks of passion can prepare
That kill the bloom before its time ;
And blanch, without the owner's crime,
The most resplendent hair.

VII

Unblest distinction ! showered on me
To bind a lingering life in chains :
All that could quit my grasp, or flee,
Is gone ;—but not the subtle stains
Fixed in the spirit ; for even here
Can I be proud that jealous fear
Of what I was remains.

VIII

A Woman rules my prison's key ;
A sister Queen, against the bent
Of law and holiest sympathy,
Detains me, doubtful of the event ;
Great God, who feel'st for my distress,
My thoughts are all that I possess,
O keep them innocent !

IX

Farewell desire of human aid,
Which abject mortals vainly court !
By friends deceived, by foes betrayed,
Of fears the prey, of hopes the sport ;
Nought but the world-redeeming Cross
Is able to supply my loss,
My burthen to support.

X

Hark ! the death-note of the year
Sounded by the castle-clock !
From her sunk eyes a stagnant tear
Stole forth, unsettled by the shock ;
But oft the woods renewed their green,
Ere the tired head of Scotland's Queen
Reposed upon the block !

(1817)

THE PILGRIM'S DREAM

OR, THE STAR AND THE GLOW-WORM ¹

A PILGRIM, when the summer day
Had closed upon his weary way,
A lodging begged beneath a castle's roof ;
But him the haughty Warder spurned ;
And from the gate the Pilgrim turned,
To seek such covert as the field
Or heath-besprinkled copse might yield,
Or lofty wood, shower-proof.
He paced along ; and, pensively,
Halting beneath a shady tree,
Whose moss-grown root might serve for couch or seat,
Fixed on a Star his upward eye ;

¹ I distinctly recollect the evening when these verses were suggested in 1818. It was on the road between Rydal and Grasmere, where Glow-worms abound. A Star was shining above the ridge of Loughrigg Fell, just opposite.

Then, from the tenant of the sky
He turned, and watched with kindred look,
A Glow-worm, in a dusky nook,
Apparent at his feet.

The murmur of a neighbouring stream
Induced a soft and slumbrous dream,
A pregnant dream, within whose shadowy bounds
He recognised the earth-born Star,
And *That* which glittered from afar ;
And (strange to witness !) from the frame
Of the ethereal Orb, there came
Intelligible sounds.

Much did it taunt the humble Light
That now, when day was fled, and night
Hushed the dark earth, fast closing weary eyes,
A very reptile could presume
To show her taper in the gloom,
As if in rivalry with One
Who sate a ruler on his throne
Erected in the skies.

"Exalted Star !" the Worm replied,
"Abate this unbecoming pride,
Or with a less uneasy lustre shine ;
Thou shrink'st as momentarily thy rays
Are mastered by the breathing haze ;
While neither mist, nor thickest cloud
That shapes in heaven its murky shroud,
Hath power to injure mine.

"But not for this do I aspire
To match the spark of local fire,
That at my will burns on the dewy lawn,
With thy acknowledged glories ;—No !
Yet, thus upbraided, I may show
What favours do attend me here,
Till, like thyself, I disappear
Before the purple dawn."

When this in modest guise was said,
Across the welkin seemed to spread
A boding sound—for aught but sleep unfit
Hills quaked, the rivers backward ran ;
That Star, so proud of late, looked wan ;
And reeled with visionary stir

In the blue depth, like Lucifer
Cast headlong to the pit !

Fire raged : and, when the spangled floor
Of ancient ether was no more,
New heavens succeeded, by the dream brought forth :
And all the happy Souls that rode
Transfigured through that fresh abode,
Had heretofore, in humble trust,
Shone meekly 'mid their native dust,
The Glow-worms of the earth !

This knowledge, from an Angel's voice
Proceeding, made the heart rejoice
Of Him who slept upon the open lea :
Waking at morn he murmured not ;
And, till life's journey closed, the spot
Was to the Pilgrim's soul endeared,
Where by that dream he had been cheered
Beneath the shady tree.

(1818)

INSCRIPTIONS

SUPPOSED TO BE FOUND IN AND NEAR A HERMIT'S CELL
1818

I

HOPES what are they?—Beads of morning
Strung on slender blades of grass ;
Or a spider's web adorning
In a strait and treacherous pass.

What are fears but voices airy ?
Whispering harm where harm is not ;
And deluding the unwary
Till the fatal bolt is shot !

What is glory?—in the socket
See how dying tapers fare !
What is pride?—a whizzing rocket
That would emulate a star

What is friendship?—do not trust her,
Nor the vows which she has made ;
Diamonds dart their brightest lustre
From a palsy-shaken head.

What is truth?—a staff rejected ;
Duty?—an unwelcome clog ;

Inscriptions

Joy?—a moon by fits reflected
 In a swamp or watery bog ;
 Bright, as if through ether steering,
 To the Traveller's eye it shone :
 He hath hailed it re-appearing—
 And as quickly it is gone ;
 Such is Joy—as quickly hidden,
 Or mis-shapen to the sight,
 And by sullen weeds forbidden
 To resume its native light.
 What is youth?—a dancing billow,
 (Winds behind, and rocks before !)
 Age?—a drooping, tottering willow
 On a flat and lazy shore.
 What is peace?—when pain is over,
 And love ceases to rebel,
 Let the last faint sigh discover
 That precedes the passing knell !

INSCRIBED UPON A ROCK ¹

PAUSE, Traveller ! whoso'er thou be
 Whom chance may lead to this retreat,
 Where silence yields reluctantly
 Even to the fleecy straggler's bleat ;
 Give voice to what my hand shall trace,
 And fear not lest an idle sound
 Of words unsuited to the place
 Disturb its solitude profound.
 I saw this Rock, while vernal air
 Blew softly o'er the russet heath,
 Uphold a Monument as fair
 As church or abbey furnisheth.
 Unsullied did it meet the day,
 Like marble, white, like ether, pure ;
 As if, beneath, some hero lay,
 Honoured with costliest sepulture.
 My fancy kindled as I gazed ;
 And, ever as the sun shone forth,

¹ The monument of ice here spoken of I observed while ascending the middle road of the three ways that lead from Rydal to Grasmere.

The flattered structure glistened, blazed,
And seemed the proudest thing on earth.
But frost had reared the gorgeous Pile
Unsound as those which Fortune builds—
To undermine with secret guile,
Sapped by the very beam that gilds.
And, while I gazed, with sudden shock
Fell the whole Fabric to the ground ;
And naked left this dripping Rock,
With shapeless ruin spread around !

III

HAST thou seen, with flash incessant,
Bubbles gliding under ice,
Bodied forth and evanescent,
No one knows by what device ?
Such are thoughts !—A wind-swept meadow
Mimicking a troubled sea,
Such is life ; and death a shadow
From the rock eternity !

IV

NEAR THE SPRING OF THE HERMITAGE

TROUBLED long with warring notions
Long impatient of thy rod,
I resign my soul's emotions
Unto Thee, mysterious God !
What avails the kindly shelter
Yielded by this craggy rent,
If my spirit toss and welter
On the waves of discontent ?
Parching Summer hath no warrant
To consume this crystal Well ;
Rains, that make each rill a torrent,
Neither sully it nor swell.
Thus, dishonouring not her station,
Would my Life present to Thee,
Gracious God, the pure oblation
Of divine tranquillity !

V

Nor seldom, clad in radiant vest,
Deceitfully goes forth the Morn ;

340 Evening of Splendour and Beauty

Not seldom Evening in the west
Sinks smilingly forsworn.

The smoothest seas will sometimes prove,
To the confiding Bark, untrue ;
And, if she trust the stars above,
They can be treacherous too.

The umbrageous Oak, in pomp outspread
Full oft, when storms the welkin rend,
Draws lightning down upon the head
It promised to defend.

But Thou art true, incarnate Lord,
Who didst vouchsafe for man to die ;
Thy smile is sure, thy plighted word
No change can falsify ! .

I bent before thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace on suppliant knee ;
And peace was given,—nor peace alone,
But faith sublimed to ecstasy !

COMPOSED UPON AN EVENING OF EXTRA- ORDINARY SPLENDOUR AND BEAUTY¹

I

HAD this effulgence disappeared
With flying haste, I might have sent,
Among the speechless clouds, a look
Of blank astonishment ;
But 'tis endued with power to stay,
And sanctify one closing day,
That frail Mortality may see—
What is ?—ah no, but what *can* be !
Time was when field and watery cove
With modulated echoes rang,
While choirs of fervent Angels sang
Their vespers in the grove ;
Or, crowning, star-like, each some sovereign height,
Warbled, for heaven above and earth below,
Strains suitable to both.—Such holy rite,
Methinks, if audibly repeated now
From hill or valley, could not move
Sublimier transport, purer love,
Than doth this silent spectacle—the gleam—
The shadow—and the peace supreme !

¹ Felt and in a great measure composed upon the little mount in front of our abode at Rydal.

Evening of Splendour and Beauty 341

II

No sound is uttered,—but a deep
And solemn harmony pervades
The hollow vale from steep to steep,
And penetrates the glades.
Far-distant images draw nigh,
Called forth by wondrous potency
Of beamy radiance, that imbues,
Whate'er it strikes, with gem-like hues !
In vision exquisitely clear,
Herds range along the mountain side ;
And glistening antlers are descried ;
And gilded flocks appear.
Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal Eve !
But long as god-like wish, or hope divine,
Informs my spirit, ne'er can I believe
That this magnificence is wholly thine !
—From worlds not quickened by the sun
A portion of the gift is won ;
An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
On ground which British shepherds tread !

III

And, if there be whom broken ties
Afflict, or injuries assail,
Yon hazy ridges to their eyes
Present a glorious scale,
Climbing suffused with sunny air,
To stop—no record hath told where !
And tempting Fancy to ascend,
And with immortal Spirits blend !
—Wings at my shoulders seem to play ;
But, rooted here, I stand and gaze
On those bright steps that heavenward raise
Their practicable way.
Come forth, ye drooping old men, look abroad,
And see to what fair countries ye are bound !
And if some traveller, weary of his road,
Hath slept since noon-tide on the grassy ground,
Ye Genii ! to his covert speed ;
And wake him with such gentle heed
As may attune his soul to meet the dower
Bestowed on this transcendent hour !

IV

Such hues from their celestial Urn
 Were wont to stream before mine eye,
 Where'er it wandered in the morn
 Of blissful infancy.
 This glimpse of glory, why renewed?
 Nay, rather speak with gratitude;
 For, if a vestige of those gleams
 Survived, 'twas only in my dreams.
 Dread Power! whom peace and calmness serve
 No less than Nature's threatening voice,
 If aught unworthy be my choice,
 From THEE if I would swerve;
 Oh, let thy grace remind me of the light
 Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored;
 Which, at this moment, on my waking sight
 Appears to shine, by miracle restored;
 My soul, though yet confined to earth,
 Rejoices in a second birth!
 —'Tis past, the visionary splendour fades;
 And night approaches with her shades.¹

(1818)

COMPOSED DURING A STORM²

ONE who was suffering tumult in his soul,
 Yet failed to seek the sure relief of prayer,
 Went forth—his course surrendering to the care
 Of the fierce wind, while mid-day lightnings prowled
 Insidiously, untimely thunders growled;
 While trees, dim-seen, in frenzied numbers, tear
 The lingering remnant of their yellow hair,
 And shivering wolves, surprised with darkness, howl
 As if the sun were not. He raised his eye
 Soul-smitten; for, that instant, did appear
 Large space ('mid dreadful clouds) of purest sky,
 An azure disc—shield of Tranquillity;
 Invisible, unlooked-for, minister
 Of providential goodness ever nigh!

(1819)

¹ The multiplication of mountain-ridges, described at the commencement of the third stanza of this Ode, as a kind of Jacob's Ladder, leading to Heaven, is produced either by watery vapours, or sunny haze;—in the present instance by the latter cause. Allusions to the Ode, entitled "Intimations of Immortality," pervade the last stanza of the foregoing Poem.

² Written in Rydal Woods, by the side of a torrent.

"PURE ELEMENT OF WATERS" ¹

PURE element of waters ! wheresoe'er
 Thou dost forsake thy subterranean haunts,
 Green herbs, bright flowers, and berry-bearing plants,
 Rise into life and in thy train appear :
 And, through the sunny portion of the year,
 Swift insects shine, thy hovering pursuivants :
 And, if thy bounty fail, the forest pants ;
 And hart and hind and hunter with his spear
 Languish and droop together. Nor unfelt
 In man's perturbèd soul thy sway benign ;
 And, haply, far within the marble belt
 Of central earth, where tortured Spirits pine
 For grace and goodness lost, thy murmurs melt
 Their anguish,—and they blend sweet songs with thine.

(1819)

MALHAM COVE

Was the aim frustrated by force or guile,
 When giants scooped from out the rocky ground,
 Tier under tier, this semicirque profound ?
 (Giants—the same who built in Erin's isle
 That Causeway with incomparable toil!)—
 Oh, had this vast theatric structure wound
 With finished sweep into a perfect round,
 No mightier work had gained the plausible smile
 Of all-beholding Phœbus ! But, alas,
 Vain earth ! false world ! Foundations must be laid
 In Heaven ; for, 'mid the wreck of is and was,
 Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
 Make sadder transits o'er thought's optic glass
 Than noblest objects utterly decayed.

(1819)

GORDALE

At early dawn, or rather when the air
 Glimmers with fading light, and shadowy Eve
 Is busiest to confer and to bereave ;
 Then, pensive Votary ! let thy feet repair
 To Gordale-chasm, terrific as the lair
 Where the young lions couch ; for so, by leave
 Of the propitious hour, thou may'st perceive
 The local Deity, with oozy hair

¹ This, and the two following, were suggested by Mr. W. Westall's
 Views of the Caves, etc., in Yorkshire.,

The Wild Duck's Nest

And mineral crown, beside his jagged urn,
 Recumbent : Him thou may'st behold, who hides
 His lineaments by day, yet there presides,
 Teaching the docile waters how to turn,
 Or (if need be) impediment to spurn,
 And force their passage to the salt-sea tides !

(1819)

"AËRIAL ROCK—WHOSE SOLITARY BROW"¹

AËRIAL Rock—whose solitary brow
 From this low threshold daily meets my sight ;
 When I step forth to hail the morning light ;
 Or quit the stars with a lingering farewell—how
 Shall Fancy pay to thee a grateful vow ?
 How, with the Muse's aid, her love attest ?
 —By planting on thy naked head the crest
 Of an imperial Castle, which the plough
 Of ruin shall not touch. Innocent scheme !
 That doth presume no more than to supply
 A grace the sinuous vale and roaring stream
 Want, through neglect of hoar Antiquity.
 Rise, then, ye votive Towers ! and catch a gleam
 Of golden sunset, ere it fade and die.

(1819)

THE WILD DUCK'S NEST

THE imperial Consort of the Fairy-king
 Owns not a sylvan bower ; or gorgeous cell
 With emerald floored, and with purpureal shell
 Ceilinged and roofed ; that is so fair a thing
 As this low structure, for the tasks of Spring,
 Prepared by one who loves the buoyant swell
 Of the brisk waves, yet here consents to dwell ;
 And spreads in steadfast peace her brooding wing.
 Words cannot paint the o'ershadowing yew-tree bough,
 And dimly-gleaming Nest,—a hollow crown
 Of golden leaves inlaid with silver down,
 Fine as the mother's softest plumes allow :
 I gazed—and, self-accused while gazing, sighed
 For human-kind, weak slaves of cumbrous pride !

(1819)

¹ A projecting point of Loughrigg, nearly in front of Rydal Mount. Thence looking at it, you are struck with the boldness of its aspect ; but walking under it, you admire the beauty of its details. It is vulgarly called Holme-scar, probably from the insulated pasture by the waterside below it.

Captivity—Mary Queen of Scots 345

WRITTEN UPON A BLANK LEAF IN "THE COMPLETE ANGLER"

WHILE flowing rivers yield a blameless sport,
Shall live the name of Walton : Sage benign !
Whose pen, the mysteries of the rod and line
Unfolding, did not fruitlessly exhort
To reverend watching of each still report
That Nature utters from her rural shrine.
Meek, nobly versed in simple discipline,
He found the longest summer day too short,
To his loved pastime given by sedgy Lee,
Or down the tempting maze of Shawford brook—
Fairer than life itself, in this sweet Book,
The cowslip-bank and shady willow-tree ;
And the fresh meads—where flowed, from every nook
Of his full bosom, gladsome Piety !

(1819)

CAPTIVITY—MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

"As the cold aspect of a sunless way
Strikes through the Traveller's frame with deadlier chill,
Oft as appears a grove, or obvious hill,
Glistening with unparticipated ray,
Or shining slope where he must never stray ;
So joys, remembered without wish or will
Sharpen the keenest edge of present ill,—
On the crushed heart a heavier burthen lay.
Just Heaven, contract the compass of my mind
To fit proportion with my altered state !
Quench those felicities whose light I find
Reflected in my bosom all too late !—
O be my spirit, like my thralldom, strait ;
And, like mine eyes that stream with sorrow, blind !"

(1819)

TO A SNOWDROP

LONE Flower, hemmed in with snows and white as they
But hardier far, once more I see thee bend
Thy forehead, as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day by day,
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops, waylay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend ;
Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise ! Blue-eyed May

346 On Seeing a Tuft of Snowdrops

Shall soon behold this border thickly set
 With bright jonquils, their odours lavishing
 On the soft west-wind and his frolic peers ;
 Nor will I then thy modest grace forget,
 Chaste Snowdrop, venturous harbinger of Spring,
 And pensive monitor of fleeting years !

(1819)

ON SEEING A TUFT OF SNOWDROPS IN A STORM

WHEN haughty expectations prostrate lie,
 And grandeur crouches like a guilty thing,
 Oft shall the lowly weak, till nature bring
 Mature release, in fair society
 Survive, and Fortune's utmost anger try ;
 Like these frail snowdrops that together cling,
 And nod their helmets, smitten by the wing
 Of many a furious whirl-blast sweeping by.
 Observe the faithful flowers ! if small to great
 May lead the thoughts, thus struggling used to stand
 The Emathian phalanx, nobly obstinate ;
 And so the bright immortal Theban band,
 Whom onset, fiercely urged at Jove's command,
 Might overwhelm, but could not separate !

(1819)

COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE VALLEYS OF WESTMORELAND, ON EASTER SUNDAY

WITH each recurrence of this glorious morn
 That saw the Saviour in his human frame
 Rise from the dead, erewhile the Cottage-dame
 Put on fresh raiment—till that hour unworn :
 Domestic hands the home-bred wool had shorn,
 And she who span it culled the daintiest fleece,
 In thoughtful reverence to the Prince of Peace,
 Whose temples bled beneath the platted thorn.
 A blest estate when piety sublime
 These humble props disdained not ! O green dales !
 Sad may I be who heard your sabbath chime
 When Art's abused inventions were unknown ;
 Kind Nature's various wealth was all your own ;
 And benefits were weighed in Reason's scales !

(1819)

'I Watch, and Long have Watched' 347

"GRIEF, THOU HAST LOST AN EVER-READY
FRIEND" ¹

GRIEF, thou hast lost an ever-ready friend
Now that the cottage Spinning-wheel is mute ;
And Care—a comforter that best could suit
Her froward mood, and softliest reprehend ;
And Love—a charmer's voice, that used to lend,
More efficaciously than aught that flows
From harp or lute, kind influence to compose
The throbbing pulse—else troubled without end :
Even Joy could tell, Joy craving truce and rest
From her own overflow, what power sedate
On those revolving motions did await
Assiduously—to soothe her aching breast ;
And, to a point of just relief, abate
The mantling triumphs of a day too blest.

(1819)

"I WATCH, AND LONG HAVE WATCHED,
WITH CALM REGRET" ²

I WATCH, and long have watched, with calm regret
Yon slowly-sinking star—immortal Sire
(So might he seem) of all the glittering quire !
Blue ether still surrounds him—yet—and yet ;
But now the horizon's rocky parapet
Is reached, where, forfeiting his bright attire,
He burns—transmuted to a dusky fire—
Then pays submissively the appointed debt
To the flying moments, and is seen no more.
Angels and gods ! We struggle with our fate,
While health, power, glory, from their height decline,
Depressed ; and then extinguished ; and our state,
In this, how different, lost Star, from thine,
That no to-morrow shall our beams restore !

(1819)

¹ I could write a treatise of lamentation upon the changes brought about among the cottages of Westmoreland by the silence of the spinning-wheel.

² Suggested in front of Rydal Mount, the rocky parapet being the summit of Loughrigg Fell opposite. Not once only, but a hundred times, have the feelings of this Sonnet been awakened by the same objects seen from the same place.

"I HEARD (ALAS! 'T WAS ONLY IN A DREAM)"

I HEARD (alas! 'twas only in a dream)
 Strains—which, as sage Antiquity believed,
 By waking ears have sometimes been received
 Wafted adown the wind from lake or stream;
 A most melodious requiem, a supreme
 And perfect harmony of notes, achieved
 By a fair Swan on drowsy billows heaved,
 O'er which her pinions shed a silver gleam.
 For is she not the votary of Apollo?
 And knows she not, singing as he inspires,
 That bliss awaits her which the ungenial Hollow¹
 Of the dull earth partakes not, nor desires?
 Mount, tuneful Bird, and join the immortal quires!
 She soared—and I awoke, struggling in vain to follow.
 (1819)

THE HAUNTED TREE²

TO ———

THOSE silver clouds collected round the sun
 His mid-day warmth abate not, seeming less
 To overshadow than multiply his beams
 By soft reflection—grateful to the sky,
 To rocks, fields, woods. Nor doth our human sense
 Ask, for its pleasure, screen or canopy
 More ample than the time-dismantled Oak
 Spreads o'er this tuft of heath, which now, attired
 In the whole fulness of its bloom, affords
 Couch beautiful as e'er for earthly use
 Was fashioned; whether, by the hand of Art,
 That eastern Sultan, amid flowers enwrought
 On silken tissue, might diffuse his limbs
 In languor; or, by Nature, for repose
 Of panting Wood-nymph, wearied with the chase.
 O Lady! fairer in thy Poet's sight
 Than fairest spiritual creature of the groves,
 Approach;—and, thus invited, crown with rest
 The noon-tide hour: though truly some there are
 Whose footsteps superstitiously avoid
 This venerable Tree; for, when the wind
 Blows keenly, it sends forth a creaking sound

¹ See the Phædon of Plato, by which this Sonnet was suggested.

² This tree grew in the park of Rydal.

(Above the general roar of woods and crags)
 Distinctly heard from far—a doleful note!
 As if (so Grecian shepherds would have deemed)
 The Hamadryad, pent within, bewailed
 Some bitter wrong. Nor is it unbelieved,
 By ruder fancy, that a troubled ghost
 Haunts the old trunk; lamenting deeds of which
 The flowery ground is conscious. But no wind
 Sweeps now along this elevated ridge;
 Not even a zephyr stirs;—the obnoxious Tree
 Is mute; and, in his silence, would look down,
 O lovely Wanderer of the trackless hills,
 On thy reclining form with more delight
 Than his coevals in the sheltered vale
 Seem to participate, the while they view
 Their own far-stretching arms and leafy heads
 Vividly pictured in some glassy pool,
 That, for a brief space, checks the hurrying stream!

(1819)

SEPTEMBER 1819

THE sylvan slopes with corn-clad fields
 Are hung, as if with golden shields,
 Bright trophies of the sun!
 Like a fair sister of the sky,
 Unruffled doth the blue lake lie,
 The mountains looking on.
 And, sooth to say, yon vocal grove,
 Albeit uninspired by love,
 By love untaught to ring,
 May well afford to mortal ear
 An impulse more profoundly dear
 Than music of the Spring.
 For *that* from turbulence and heat
 Proceeds, from some uneasy seat
 In nature's struggling frame,
 Some region of impatient life:
 And jealousy, and quivering strife,
 Therein a portion claim.
 This, this is holy;—while I hear
 These vespers of another year,
 This hymn of thanks and praise,
 My spirit seems to mount above
 The anxieties of human love,
 And earth's precarious days.

Upon the same Occasion

But list !—though winter storms be nigh,
Unchecked is that soft harmony :
There lives Who can provide
For all his creatures ; and in Him,
Even like the radiant Seraphim,
These choristers confide.

UPON THE SAME OCCASION

DEPARTING summer hath assumed
An aspect tenderly illumed,
The gentlest look of spring ;
That calls from yonder leafy shade
Unfaded, yet prepared to fade,
A timely carolling.
No faint and hesitating trill,
Such tribute as to winter chill
The lonely redbreast pays !
Clear, loud, and lively is the din,
From social warblers gathering in
Their harvest of sweet lays.
Nor doth the example fail to cheer
Me, conscious that my leaf is sere,
And yellow on the bough :—
Fall, rosy garlands, from my head !
Ye myrtle wreaths, your fragrance shed
Around a younger brow !
Yet will I temperately rejoice ;
Wide is the range, and free the choice
Of undiscordant themes ;
Which, haply, kindred souls may prize
Not less than vernal ecstasies,
And passion's feverish dreams.
For deathless powers to verse belong,
And they like Demi-gods are strong
On whom the Muses smile ;
But some their function have disclaimed,
Best pleased with what is aptliest framed
To enervate and defile.
Not such the initiatory strains
Committed to the silent plains
In Britain's earliest dawn :
Trembled the groves, the stars grew pale,
While all-too-daringly the veil
Of nature was withdrawn !

‘A Little Unpretending Rill’ 351

Nor such the spirit-stirring note
When the live chords Alcæus smote,
Inflamed by sense of wrong ;
Woe ! woe to Tyrants ! from the lyre
Broke threateningly, in sparkles dire
Of fierce vindictive song.

And not unhallowed was the page
By wingèd Love inscribed, to assuage
The pangs of vain pursuit ;
Love listening while the Lesbian Maid
With finest touch of passion swayed
Her own Æolian lute.

O ye, who patiently explore
The wreck of Herculean lore,
What rapture ! could ye seize
Some Theban fragment, or unroll
One precious, tender-hearted, scroll
Of pure Simonides.

That were, indeed, a genuine birth
Of poesy ; a bursting forth
Of genius from the dust :
What Horace gloried to behold,
What Maro loved, shall we enfold ?
Can haughty Time be just !

(1819)

“THERE IS A LITTLE UNPRETENDING RILL”¹

THERE is a little unpretending Rill
Of limpid water, humbler far than aught
That ever among Men or Naiads sought
Notice or name !—It quivers down the hill,
Furrowing its shallow way with dubious will ;
Yet to my mind this scanty Stream is brought
Often more than Ganges or the Nile ; a thought
Of private recollection sweet and still !
Months perish with their moons ; year treads on year !
But, faithful Emma ! thou with me canst say
That, while ten thousand pleasures disappear,
And flies their memory fast almost as they,

¹ This Rill trickles down the hill-side into Windermere, near Low-wood. My sister and I, on our first visit together to this part of the country, walked from Kendal, and we rested to refresh ourselves by the side of the lake where the streamlet falls into it. This sonnet was written some years after in recollection of that happy ramble, that most happy day and hour.

352 On the Death of His Majesty

The immortal Spirit of one happy day
Lingers beside that Rill, in vision clear.

(182G)

COMPOSED ON THE BANKS OF A ROCKY
STREAM

DOGMATIC Teachers, of the snow-white fur !
 Ye wrangling Schoolmen, of the scarlet hood !
 Who, with a keenness not to be withstood,
 Press the point home, or falter and demur,
 Checked in your course by many a teasing burr ;
 These natural council-seats your acrid blood
 Might cool ;—and, as the Genius of the flood
 Stoops willingly to animate and spur
 Each lighter function slumbering in the brain,
 Yon eddying balls of foam, these arrowy gleams
 That o'er the pavement of the surging streams
 Welter and flash, a synod might detain
 With subtle speculations, haply vain,
 But surely less so than your far-fetched themes !

(1820)

ON THE DEATH OF HIS MAJESTY (GEORGE
THE THIRD)

WARD of the LAW!—dread Shadow of a King!
Whose realm had dwindled to one stately room;
Whose universe was gloom immersed in gloom,
Darkness as thick as life o'er life could fling,
Save haply for some feeble glimmering
Of Faith and Hope—if thou, by nature's doom,
Gently hast sunk into the quiet tomb,
Why should we bend in grief, to sorrow cling,
When thankfulness were best?—Fresh-flowing tears,
Or, where tears flow not, sigh succeeding sigh,
Yield to such after-thought the sole reply
Which justly it can claim. The Nation hears
In this deep knell, silent for threescore years,
An unexampled voice of awful memory!

(1820)

"THE STARS ARE MANSIONS"

THE stars are mansions built by Nature's hand,
And, haply, there the spirits of the blest
Dwell, clothed in radiance, their immortal vest ;
Huge Ocean shows, within his yellow strand,

To the Lady Mary Lowther 353

A habitation marvellously planned,
For life to occupy in love and rest ;
All that we see—is dome, or vault, or nest,
Or fortress, reared at Nature's sage command.
Glad thought for every season ! but the Spring
Gave it while cares were weighing on my heart,
'Mid song of birds, and insects murmuring ;
And while the youthful year's prolific art—
Of bud, leaf, blade, and flower—was fashioning
Abodes where self-disturbance hath no part.

(1820)

TO THE LADY MARY LOWTHER ¹

LADY ! I rifled a Parnassian Cave
(But seldom trod) of mildly-gleaming ore ;
And culled, from sundry beds, a lucid store
Of genuine crystals, pure as those that pave
The azure brooks, where Dian joys to lave
Her spotless limbs ; and ventured to explore
Dim shades—for reliques, upon Lethe's shore,
Cast up at random by the sullen wave.
To female hands the treasures were resigned ;
And lo this Work !—a grotto bright and clear
From stain or taint ; in which thy blameless mind
May feed on thoughts though pensive not austere ;
Or, if thy deeper spirit be inclined
To holy musing, it may enter here.

(1820)

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED THE PUBLICATION OF A CERTAIN POEM ²

A BOOK came forth of late, called PETER BELL ;
Not negligent the style ;—the matter ?—good
As aught that song records of Robin Hood ;
Or Roy, renowned through many a Scottish dell ;
But some (who brook those hackneyed themes full well,
Nor heat, at Tam o' Shanter's name, their blood)
Waxed wroth, and with foul claws, a harpy brood,
On Bard and Hero clamorously fell.

¹ With a selection from the Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea ; and extracts of similar character from other Writers ; transcribed by a female friend. [This MS. book has how been printed in the "Oxford Library of Prose and Poetry."—*Ed.*]

² See Milton's Sonnet, beginning, "A Book was writ of late called 'Tetrachordon.'"

Heed not, wild Rover once through heath and glen,
 Who mad'st at length the better life thy choice,
 Heed not such onset ! nay, if praise of men
 To thee appear not an unmeaning voice,
 Lift up that grey-haired forehead, and rejoice
 In the just tribute of thy Poet's pen !
 (1820)

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820

YE sacred Nurseries of blooming Youth !
 In whose collegiate shelter England's Flowers
 Expand, enjoying through their vernal hours
 The air of liberty, the light of truth ;
 Much have ye suffered from Time's gnawing tooth ;
 Yet, O ye spires of Oxford ! domes and towers !
 Gardens and groves ! your presence overpowers
 The soberness of reason ; till, in sooth,
 Transformed, and rushing on a bold exchange,
 I slight my own beloved Cam, to range
 Where silver Isis leads my stripling feet ;
 Pace the long avenue, or glide adown
 The stream-like windings of that glorious street—
 An eager Novice robed in fluttering gown !

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820

SHAME on this faithless heart ! that could allow
 Such transport, though but for a moment's space ;
 Not while—to aid the spirit of the place—
 The crescent moon clove with its glittering prow
 The clouds, or night-bird sang from shady bough ;
 But in plain daylight :—She, too, at my side,
 Who, with her heart's experience satisfied,
 Maintains inviolate its slightest vow !
 Sweet Fancy ! other gifts must I receive ;
 Proofs of a higher sovereignty I claim ;
 Take from *her* brow the withering flowers of eve,
 And to that brow life's morning wreath restore ;
 Let *her* be comprehended in the frame
 Of these illusions, or they please no more.

JUNE 1820

FAME tells of groves—from England far away—
 Groves¹ that inspire the Nightingale to trill

¹ Wallachia is the country alluded to.

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And modulate, with subtle reach of skill
Elsewhere unmatched, her ever-varying lay ;
Such bold report I venture to gainsay :
For I have heard the quire of Richmond hill
Chanting, with indefatigable bill,
Strains that recalled to mind a distant day ;
When, haply under shade of that same wood,
And scarcely conscious of the dashing oars
Plied steadily between those willowy shores,
The sweet-souled Poet of the Seasons stood—
Listening, and listening long, in rapturous mood,
Ye heavenly Birds ! to your Progenitors.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT¹

1820

DEDICATION

(SENT WITH THESE POEMS, IN MS., TO ——)

DEAR Fellow-travellers ! think not that the Muse,
To You presenting these memorial Lays,
Can hope the general eye thereon would gaze,
As on a mirror that gives back the hues
Of living Nature ; no—though free to choose
The greenest bowers, the most inviting ways,
The fairest landscapes and the brightest days—
Her skill she tried with less ambitious views.
For You she wrought : Ye only can supply
The life, the truth, the beauty : she confides
In that enjoyment which with You abides,
Trusts to your love and vivid memory ;
Thus far contented, that for You her verse
Shall lack not power the “meeting soul to pierce !”
W. WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, *Nov.* 1821.

¹ I set out in company with my Wife and Sister, and Mr. and Mrs. Monkhouse, then just married, and Miss Horrocks. These two ladies, sisters, we left at Berne, while Mr. Monkhouse took the opportunity of making an excursion with us among the Alps as far as Milan. Mr. H. C. Robinson joined us at Lucerne, and when this ramble was completed we rejoined at Geneva the two ladies we had left at Berne and proceeded to Paris, where Mr. Monkhouse and H. C. R. left us, and where we spent five weeks, of which there is not a record in these

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FISH-WOMEN—ON LANDING AT CALAIS

'Tis said, fantastic ocean doth enfold
The likeness of whate'er on land is seen ;
But, if the Nereid Sisters and their Queen,
Above whose heads the tide so long hath rolled,
The Dames resemble whom we here behold,
How fearful were it down through opening waves
To sink, and meet them in their fretted caves,
Withered, grotesque, immeasurably old,
And shrill and fierce in accent !—Fear it not :
For they Earth's fairest daughters do excel ;
Pure undecaying beauty is their lot ;
Their voices into liquid music swell,
Thrilling each pearly cleft and sparry grot,
The undisturbed abodes where Sea-nymphs dwell !

II

BRUGÈS

BRUGÈS I saw attired with golden light
(Streamed from the west) as with a robe of power :
The splendour fled ; and now the sunless hour,
That, slowly making way for peaceful night,
Best suits with fallen grandeur, to my sight
Offers the beauty, the magnificence,
And sober graces, left her for defence
Against the injuries of time, the spite
Of fortune, and the desolating storms
Of future war. Advance not—spare to hide,
O gentle Power of darkness ! these mild hues ;
Obscure not yet these silent avenues
Of stateliest architecture, where the Forms
Of nun-like females, with soft motion, glide !

III

BRUGÈS

THE Spirit of Antiquity—enshrined
In sumptuous buildings, vocal in sweet song,
In picture, speaking with heroic tongue,
And with devout solemnities entwined—
Mounts to the seat of grace within the mind :
Hence Forms that glide with swan-like ease along
Hence motions, even amid the vulgar throng,
To an harmonious decency confined :

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As if the streets were consecrated ground,
The city one vast temple, dedicate
To mutual respect in thought and deed ;
To leisure, to forbearances sedate ;
To social cares from jarring passions freed ;
A deeper peace than that in deserts found !

IV

AFTER VISITING THE FIELD OF WATERLOO

A WINGED Goddess—clothed in vesture wrought
Of rainbow colours ; One whose port was bold,
Whose overburthened hand could scarcely hold
The glittering crowns and garlands which it brought—
Hovered in air above the far-famed Spot.
She vanished ; leaving prospect blank and cold
Of wind-swept corn that wide around us rolled
In dreary billows ; wood, and meagre cot,
And monuments that soon must disappear :
Yet a dread local recompence we found ;
While glory seemed betrayed, while patriot-zeal
Sank in our hearts, we felt as men *should* feel
With such vast hoards of hidden carnage near,
And horror breathing from the silent ground !

V

BETWEEN NAMUR AND LIEGE

WHAT lovelier home could gentle Fancy choose ?
Is this the stream, whose cities, heights, and plains,
War's favourite playground, are with crimson stains
Familiar, as the Morn with pearly dews ?
The Morn, that now, along the silver MEUSE,
Spreading her peaceful ensigns, calls the swains
To tend their silent boats and ringing wains,
Or strip the bough whose mellow fruit bestrews
The ripening corn beneath it. As mine eyes
Turn from the fortified and threatening hill,
How sweet the prospect of yon watery glade,
With its grey rocks clustering in pensive shade—
That, shaped like old monastic turrets, rise
From the smooth meadow-ground, serene and still !

VI

AIX-LA-CHAPELLE

Was it to disenchant, and to undo,
That we approached the Seat of Charlemaine ?

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To sweep from many an old romantic strain
That faith which no devotion may renew !
Why does this puny Church present to view
Her feeble columns ? and that scanty chair !
This sword that one of our weak times might wear !
Objects of false pretence, or meanly true !
If from a traveller's fortune I might claim
A palpable memorial of that day,
Then would I seek the Pyrenean Breach
That ROLAND clove with huge two-handed sway,
And to the enormous labour left his name,
Where unremitting frosts the rocky crescent bleach.

VII

IN THE CATHEDRAL AT COLOGNE

O FOR the help of Angels to complete
This Temple—Angels governed by a plan
Thus far pursued (how gloriously !) by Man,
Studious that HE might not disdain the seat
Who dwells in heaven ! But that aspiring heat
Hath failed ; and now, ye Powers ! whose gorgeous wings
And splendid aspect yon emblazonings
But faintly picture, 'twere an office meet
For you, on these unfinished shafts to try
The midnight virtues of your harmony :—
This vast design might tempt you to repeat
Strains that call forth upon empyreal ground
Immortal Fabrics, rising to the sound
Of penetrating harps and voices sweet !

VIII

IN A CARRIAGE, UPON THE BANKS OF THE RHINE

AMID this dance of objects sadness steals
O'er the defrauded heart—while sweeping by,
As in a fit of Thespian jollity,
Beneath her vine-leaf crown the green Earth reels :
Backward, in rapid evanescence, wheels
The venerable pageantry of Time,
Each beetling rampart, and each tower sublime,
And what the Dell unwillingly reveals
Of lurking cloistral arch, through trees espied
Near the bright River's edge. Yet why repine ?
To muse, to creep, to halt at will, to gaze—

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Such sweet wayfaring—of life's spring the pride,
Her summer's faithful joy—*that* still is mine,
And in fit measure cheers autumnal days.

IX HYMN

FOR THE BOATMEN, AS THEY APPROACH THE RAPIDS
UNDER THE CASTLE OF HEIDELBERG

JESU ! bless our slender Boat,
By the current swept along ;
Loud its threatenings—let them not
Drown the music of a song
Breathed thy mercy to implore,
Where these troubled waters roar !

Saviour, for our warning, seen
Bleeding on that precious Rood ;
If, while through the meadows green
Gently wound the peaceful flood,
We forgot Thee, do not Thou
Disregard thy Suppliants now !

Hither, like yon ancient Tower
Watching o'er the River's bed,
Fling the shadow of thy power,
Else we sleep among the dead ;
Thou who trod'st the billowy sea,
Shield us in our jeopardy !

Guide our Bark among the waves ;
Through the rocks our passage smooth ;
Where the whirlpool frets and raves
Let thy love its anger soothe :
All our hope is placed in Thee ;
Miserere Domine !

X THE SOURCE OF THE DANUBE

Not, like his great Compeers, indignantly
Doth DANUBE spring to life ! The wandering Stream
(Who loves the Cross, yet to the Crescent's gleam
Unfolds a willing breast) with infant glee
Slips from his prison walls : and Fancy, free
To follow in his track of silver light,
Mounts on rapt wing, and with a moment's flight

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Hath reached the encincture of that gloomy sea
Whose waves the Orphean lyre forbade to meet
In conflict ; whose rough winds forgot their jars
To waft the heroic progeny of Greece ;
When the first Ship sailed for the Golden Fleece—
ARGO—exalted for that daring feat
To fix in heaven her shape distinct with stars.

XI

ON APPROACHING THE STAUB-BACH, LAUTERBRUNNEN

UTTERED by whom, or how inspired—designed
For what strange service, does this concert reach
Our ears, and near the dwellings of mankind !
'Mid fields familiarised to human speech ?—
No Mermaid's warble—to allay the wind
Driving some vessel toward a dangerous beach—
More thrilling melodies ; Witch answering Witch,
To chant a love-spell, never intertwined
Notes shrill and wild with art more musical :
Alas ! that from the lips of abject Want
Or Idleness in tatters mendicant
The strain should flow—free Fancy to enthrall,
And with regret and useless pity haunt
This bold, this bright, this sky-born, WATERFALL !

XII

THE FALL OF THE AAR—HANDEC

FROM the fierce aspect of this River, throwing
His giant body o'er the steep rock's brink,
Back in astonishment and fear we shrink :
But, gradually a calmer look bestowing,
Flowers we espy beside the torrent growing ;
Flowers that peep forth from many a cleft and chink,
And, from the whirlwind of his anger, drink
Hues ever fresh, in rocky fortress blowing :
They suck—from breath that, threatening to destroy,
Is more benignant than the dewy eve—
Beauty, and life, and motions as of joy :
Nor doubt but HE to whom yon Pine-trees nod
Their heads in sign of worship, Nature's God,
These humbler adorations will receive.

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XIII

MEMORIAL

NEAR THE OUTLET OF THE LAKE OF THUN

"*DEM
ANDENKEN
MEINES FREUNDES
ALOYS REDING¹
MDCCCXVIII.*"

AROUND a wild and woody hill
A gravelled pathway treading,
We reached a votive Stone that bears
The name of Aloys Reding.

Well judged the Friend who placed it there
For silence and protection ;
And haply with a finer care
Of dutiful affection.

The Sun regards it from the West ;
And, while in summer glory
He sets, his sinking yields a type
Of that pathetic story :

And oft he tempts the patriot Swiss
Amid the grove to linger ;
Till all is dim, save this bright Stone
Touched by his golden finger.

XIV

COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE CATHOLIC CANTONS

DOOMED as we are our native dust
To wet with many a bitter shower,
It ill befits us to disdain
The altar, to deride the fane,
Where simple Sufferers bend, in trust
To win a happier hour.

I love, where spreads the village lawn,
Upon some knee-worn cell to gaze :
Hail the firm unmoving cross,
Aloft, where pines their branches toss !
And to the chapel far withdrawn,
That lurks by lonely ways !

Where'er we roam—along the brink
Of Rhine—or by the sweeping Po,

¹ Aloys Reding, it will be remembered, was Captain-General of the Swiss forces, which, with a courage and perseverance worthy of the cause, opposed the flagitious and too successful attempt of Buonaparte to subjugate their country.

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Through Alpine vale, or champain wide,
Whate'er we look on, at our side
Be Charity!—to bid us think,
And feel, if we would know.

XV

AFTER-THOUGHT

O LIFE! without thy chequered scene
Of right and wrong, of weal and woe,
Success and failure, could a ground
For magnanimity be found;
For faith, 'mid ruined hopes, serene?
Or whence could virtue flow?
Pain entered through a ghastly breach—
Nor while sin lasts must effort cease;
Heaven upon earth's an empty boast;
But, for the bowers of Eden lost,
Mercy has placed within our reach
A portion of God's peace.

XVI

SCENE ON THE LAKE OF BRIENTZ

"WHAT know we of the Blest above
But that they sing and that they love?"
Yet, if they ever did inspire
A mortal hymn, or shaped the choir,
Now, where those harvest Damsels float
Homeward in their rugged Boat,
(While all the ruffling winds are fled—
Each slumbering on some mountain's head)
Now, surely, hath that gracious aid
Been felt, that influence is displayed.
Pupils of Heaven, in order stand
The rustic Maidens, every hand
Upon a Sister's shoulder laid,—
To chant, as glides the boat along,
A simple, but a touching, song;
To chant, as Angels do above,
The melodies of Peace in love!

XVII

ENGELBERG, THE HILL OF ANGELS

For gentlest uses, oft-times Nature takes
The work of Fancy from her willing hands;

Memorials of Tour on the Continent 363

And such a beautiful creation makes
As renders needless spells and magic wands,
And for the boldest tale belief commands.
When first mine eyes beheld that famous Hill,
The sacred ENGELBERG, celestial Bands,
With intermingling motions soft and still,
Hung round its top, on wings that changed their hues at will.
Clouds do not name those Visitants ; they were
The very Angels whose authentic lays,
Sung from that heavenly ground in middle air,
Made known the spot where piety should raise
A holy Structure to the Almighty's praise.
Resplendent Apparition ! if in vain
My ears did listen, 'twas enough to gaze ;
And watch the slow departure of the train,
Whose skirts the glowing Mountain thirsted to detain.

XVIII

OUR LADY OF THE SNOW

MEEK Virgin Mother, more benign
Than fairest Star, upon the height
Of thy own mountain,¹ set to keep
Lone vigils through the hours of sleep,
What eye can look upon thy shrine
Untroubled at the sight ?

These crowded offerings as they hang
In sign of misery relieved,
Even these, without intent of theirs,
Report of comfortless despairs,
Of many a deep and cureless pang
And confidence deceived.

To Thee, in this ærial cleft,
As to a common centre, tend
All sufferers that no more rely
On mortal succour—all who sigh
And pine, of human hope bereft,
Nor wish for earthly friend.

And hence, O Virgin Mother mild !
Though plenteous flowers around thee blow
Not only from the dreary strife
Of Winter, but the storms of life,
Thee have thy Votaries aptly styled,
OUR LADY OF THE SNOW.

¹ Mount Righi.

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Even for the Man who stops not here,
But down the irriguous valley hies,
Thy very name, O Lady! flings,
O'er blooming fields and gushing springs,
A tender sense of shadowy fear,
And chastening sympathies!

Nor falls that intermingling shade
To summer-gladness unkind:
It chastens only to requite
With gleams of fresher, purer, light;
While, o'er the flower-enamelled glade,
More sweetly breathes the wind.

But on!—a tempting downward way,
A verdant path before us lies;
Clear shines the glorious sun above;
Then give free course to joy and love,
Deeming the evil of the day
Sufficient for the wise.

XIX EFFUSION

IN PRESENCE OF THE PAINTED TOWER OF TELL, AT ALTORF¹

WHAT though the Italian pencil wrought not here,
Nor such fine skill as did the meed bestow
On Marathonian valour, yet the tear
Springs forth in presence of this gaudy show,
While narrow cares their limits overflow.
Thrice happy, burghers, peasants, warriors old,
Infants in arms, and ye, that as ye go
Homeward or schoolward, aye what ye behold!
Heroes before your time, in frolic fancy bold!

And when that calm Spectatress from on high
Looks down—the bright and solitary Moon,
Who never gazes but to beautify;
And snow-fed torrents, which the blaze of noon
Roused into fury, murmur a soft tune
That fosters peace, and gentleness recalls;
Then might the passing Monk receive a boon
Of saintly pleasure from these pictured walls,
While, on the warlike groups, the mellowing lustre falls.

¹ This Tower stands upon the spot where grew the Linden Tree against which his Son is said to have been placed when the Father's archery was put to proof under circumstances so famous in Swiss Story.

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How blest the souls who when their trials come
Yield not to terror or despondency,
But face like that sweet Boy their mortal doom,
Whose head the ruddy apple tops, while he
Expectant stands beneath the linden tree :
He quakes not like the timid forest game,
But smiles—the hesitating shaft to free ;
Assured that Heaven its justice will proclaim,
And to his Father give its own unerring aim.

XX

THE TOWN OF SCHWYTZ

By antique Fancy trimmed—though lowly, bred
To dignity—in thee, O SCHWYTZ ! are seen
The genuine features of the golden mean ;
Equality by Prudence governèd,
Or jealous Nature ruling in her stead ;
And, therefore, art thou blest with peace, serene
As that of the sweet fields and meadows green
In unambitious compass round thee spread.
Majestic BERNE, high on her guardian steep,
Holding a central station of command,
Might well be styled this noble body's HEAD ;
Thou, lodged 'mid mountainous entrenchments deep,
Its HEART ; and ever may the heroic Land
Thy name, O SCHWYTZ, in happy freedom keep !¹

XXI

ON HEARING THE "RANZ DES VACHES" ON THE TOP OF THE PASS OF ST. GOTHARD

I LISTEN—but no faculty of mine
Avails those modulations to detect,
Which, heard in foreign lands, the Swiss affect
With tenderest passion ; leaving him to pine
(So fame reports) and die,—his sweet-breathed kine
Remembering, and green Alpine pastures decked
With vernal flowers. Yet may we not reject
The tale as fabulous.—Here while I recline,
Mindful how others by this simple Strain
Are moved, for me—upon this Mountain named
Of God himself from dread pre-eminence—
Aspiring thoughts, by memory reclaimed,

¹ Nearly 500 years (says Ebel, speaking of the French Invasion) had elapsed, when, for the first time, foreign soldiers were seen upon the frontiers of this small Canton, to impose upon it the laws of their governors.

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Yield to the Music's touching influence ;
And joys of distant home my heart enchain.

XXII

FORT FUENTES¹

DREAD hour ! when, upheaved by war's sulphurous blast,
This sweet-visaged Cherub of Parian stone
So far from the holy enclosure was cast,
To couch in this thicket of brambles alone,
To rest where the lizard may bask in the palm
Of his half-open hand pure from blemish or speck ;
And the green, gilded snake, without troubling the calm
Of the beautiful countenance, twine round his neck ;
Where haply (kind service to Piety due !)
When winter the grove of its mantle bereaves,
Some bird (like our own honoured redbreast) may strew
The desolate Slumberer with moss and with leaves.
FUENTES once harboured the good and the brave,
Nor to her was the dance of soft pleasure unknown ;
Her banners for festal enjoyment did wave
While the thrill of her fifes thro' the mountains was blown ;
Now gads the wild vine o'er the pathless ascent ;—
O silence of Nature, how deep is thy sway,
When the whirlwind of human destruction is spent,
Our tumults appeased, and our strifes passed away !

XXIII

THE CHURCH OF SAN SALVADOR²

SEEN FROM THE LAKE OF LUGANO

THOU sacred Pile ! whose turrets rise
From yon steep mountain's loftiest stage,
Guarded by lone San Salvador ;
Sink (if thou must) as heretofore,
To sulphurous bolts a sacrifice,
But ne'er to human rage !

¹ The Ruins of Fort Fuentes form the crest of a rocky eminence that rises from the plain at the head of the Lake of Como, commanding views up the Valteline, and toward the town of Chiavenna. The prospect in the latter direction is characterised by melancholy sublimity.

² This Church was almost destroyed by lightning a few years ago, but the altar and the image of the Patron Saint were untouched. The Mount, upon the summit of which the Church is built, stands amid the intricacies of the Lake of Lugano ; and is, from a hundred points of view, its principal ornament, rising to the height of 2000 feet, and on one side nearly perpendicular.

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On Horeb's top, on Sinai, deigned
To rest the universal Lord :
Why leap the fountains from their cells
Where everlasting Bounty dwells ?—
That, while the Creature is sustained,
His God may be adored.

Cliffs, fountains, rivers, seasons, times—
Let all remind the soul of heaven ;
Our slack devotion needs them all ;
And Faith—so oft of sense the thrall,
While she, by aid of Nature, climbs—
May hope to be forgiven.

Glory, and patriotic Love,
And all the Poms of this frail "spot
Which men call Earth," have yearned to seek,
Associate with the simply meek,
Religion in the sainted grove,
And in the hallowed grot.

Thither, in time of adverse shocks,
Of fainting hopes and backward wills,
Did mighty Tell repair of old—
A Hero cast in Nature's mould,
Deliverer of the stedfast rocks
And of the ancient hills !

He, too, of battle-martyrs chief !
Who, to recall his daunted peers,
For victory shaped an open space,
By gathering with a wide embrace,
Into his single breast, a sheaf
Of fatal Austrian spears.¹

XXIV

THE ITALIAN ITINERANT AND THE SWISS GOATHERD

PART I

I

Now that the farewell tear is dried,
Heaven prosper thee, be hope thy guide,
Hope be thy guide, adventurous Boy ;
The wages of thy travel, joy !

¹Arnold Winkelried, at the battle of Sempach, broke an Austrian phalanx in this manner. The event is one of the most famous in the annals of Swiss heroism ; and pictures and prints of it are frequent throughout the country.

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Whether for London bound—to trill
Thy mountain notes with simple skill ;
Or on thy head to poise a show
Of Images in seemly row ;
The graceful form of milk-white Steed,
Or Bird that soared with Ganymede ;
Or through our hamlets thou wilt bear
The sightless Milton, with his hair
Around his placid temples curled ;
And Shakspeare at his side—a freight,
If clay could think and mind were weight,
For him who bore the world !
Hope be thy guide, adventurous Boy ;
The wages of thy travel, joy !

II

But thou, perhaps, (alert as free
Though serving sage philosophy)
Wilt ramble over hill and dale,
A Vender of the well-wrought Scale,
Whose sentient tube instructs to time
A purpose to a fickle clime :
Whether thou choose this useful part,
Or minister to finer art,
Though robbed of many a cherished dream,
And crossed by many a shattered scheme,
What stirring wonders wilt thou see
In the proud Isle of liberty !
Yet will the Wanderer sometimes pine
With thoughts which no delights can chase,
Recall a Sister's last embrace,
His Mother's neck entwine ;
Nor shall forget the Maiden coy
That *would* have loved the bright-haired Boy !

III

My Song, encouraged by the grace
That beams from his ingenuous face,
For this Adventurer scruples not
To prophesy a golden lot ;
Due recompence, and safe return
To Como's steeps—his happy bourne !
Where he, aloft in garden glade,
Shall tend, with his own dark-eyed Maid,
The towering maize, and prop the twig
That ill supports the luscious fig ;

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Or feed his eye in paths sun-proof
With purple of the trellis-roof,
That through the jealous leaves escapes
From Cadenabbia's pendent grapes.
—Oh might he tempt that Goatherd-child
To share his wanderings! him whose look
Even yet my heart can scarcely brook,
So touchingly he smiled—
As with a rapture caught from heaven—
For unasked alms in pity given.

PART II

I

With nodding plumes, and lightly drest
Like foresters in leaf-green vest,
The Helvetian Mountaineers, on ground
For Tell's dread archery renowned,
Before the target stood—to claim
The guerdon of the steadiest aim.
Loud was the rifle-gun's report—
A startling thunder quick and short!
But, flying through the heights around,
Echo prolonged a tell-tale sound
Of hearts and hands alike “prepared
The treasures they enjoy to guard!”
And, if there be a favoured hour
When Heroes are allowed to quit
The tomb, and on the clouds to sit
With tutelary power,
On their Descendants shedding grace—
This was the hour, and that the place.

II

But Truth inspired the Bards of old
When of an iron age they told,
Which to unequal laws gave birth,
And drove Astræa from the earth.
—A gentle Boy (perchance with blood
As noble as the best endued,
But seemingly a Thing despised;
Even by the sun and air unprized;
For not a tinge or flowery streak
Appeared upon his tender cheek)
Heart-deaf to those rebounding notes,
Apart, beside his silent goats,

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Sate watching in a forest shed,
Pale, ragged, with bare feet and head ;
Mute as the snow upon the hill,
And, as the saint he prays to, still.
Ah, what avails heroic deed ?
What liberty ? if no defence
Be won for feeble Innocence.
Father of all ! though wilful Manhood read
His punishment in soul-distress,
Grant to the morn of life its natural blessedness !

XXV

THE LAST SUPPER

BY LEONARDO DA VINCI, IN THE REFECTORY OF THE
CONVENT OF MARIA DELLA GRAZIA, MILAN

THO' searching damps and many an envious flaw
Have marred this Work ; the calm ethereal grace,
The love deep-seated in the Saviour's face,
The mercy, goodness, have not failed to awe
The Elements ; as they do melt and thaw
The heart of the Beholder—and erase
(At least for one rapt moment) every trace
Of disobedience to the primal law.
The annunciation of the dreadful truth
Made to the Twelve, survives : lip, forehead, cheek,
And hand reposing on the board in ruth
Of what it utters, while the unguilty seek
Unquestionable meanings—still bespeak
A labour worthy of eternal youth !

XXVI

THE ECLIPSE OF THE SUN, 1820

HIGH on her speculative tower
Stood Science waiting for the hour
When Sol was destined to endure
That darkening of his radiant face
Which Superstition strove to chase,
Erewhile, with rites impure.
Afloat beneath Italian skies,
Through regions fair as Paradise
We gaily passed,—till Nature wrought
A silent and unlooked-for change,
That checked the desultory range
Of joy and sprightly thought.

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Where'er was dipped the toiling oar,
The waves danced round us as before,
As lightly, though of altered hue,
'Mid recent coolness, such as falls
At noontide from umbrageous walls
That screen the morning dew

No vapour stretched its wings ; no cloud
Cast far or near a murky shroud ;
The sky an azure field displayed ;
'Twas sunlight sheathed and gently charmed,
Of all its sparkling rays disarmed,
And as in slumber laid,—

Or something night and day between,
Like moonshine—but the hue was green ;
Still moonshine, without shadow, spread
On jutting rock, and curvèd shore,
Where gazed the peasant from his door
And on the mountain's head.

It tinged the Julian steeps—it lay,
Lugano ! on thy ample bay ;
The solemnizing veil was drawn
O'er villas, terraces, and towers ;
To Albogasio's olive bowers,
Porlezza's verdant lawn.

But Fancy with the speed of fire
Hath passed to Milan's loftiest spire,
And there alights 'mid that aerial host
Of Figures human and divine,
White as the snows of Apennine
Indurated by frost.

Awe-stricken she beholds the array
That guards the Temple night and day ;
Angels she sees—that might from heaven have flown,
And Virgin-saints, who not in vain
Have striven by purity to gain
The beatific crown—

Sees long-drawn files, concentric rings
Each narrowing above each ;—the wings,
The uplifted palms, the silent marble lips,
The starry zone of sovereign height,¹
All steeped in this portentous light !
All suffering dim eclipse !

¹ Above the highest circle of figures is a zone of metallic stars.

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Thus after Man had fallen (if aught
These perishable spheres have wrought
May with that issue be compared)
Throngs of celestial visages,
Darkening like water in the breeze,
A holy sadness shared.

Lo ! while I speak, the labouring Sun
His glad deliverance has begun :
The cypress waves her sombre plume
More cheerily ; and town and tower,
The vineyard and the olive-bower,
Their lustre re-assume !

O Ye, who guard and grace my home
While in far-distant lands we roam,
What countenance hath this Day put on for you ?
While we looked round with favoured eyes,
Did sullen mists hide lake and skies
And mountains from your view ?

Or was it given you to behold
Like vision, pensive though not cold,
From the smooth breast of gay Winandermere ?
Saw ye the soft yet awful veil
Spread over Grasmere's lovely dale,
Helvellyn's brow severe ?

I ask in vain—and know far less
If sickness, sorrow, or distress
Have spared my Dwelling to this hour ;
Sad blindness ! but ordained to prove
Our faith in Heaven's unfailing love
And all-controlling power.

XXVII

THE THREE COTTAGE GIRLS

I

How blest the Maid whose heart—yet free
From Love's uneasy sovereignty—
Beats with a fancy running high,
Her simple cares to magnify ;
Whom Labour, never urged to toil,
Hath cherished on a healthful soil ;
Who knows not pomp, who heeds not pelf ;
Whose heaviest sin it is to look
Askance upon her pretty Self

Memorials of Tour on the Continent 373

Reflected in some crystal brook ;
Whom grief hath spared—who sheds no tear
But in sweet pity ; and can hear
Another's praise from envy clear.

II

Such (but O lavish Nature ! why
That dark unfathomable eye,
Where lurks a Spirit that replies
To stillest mood of softest skies,
Yet hints at peace to be o'erthrown,
Another's first, and then her own ?)
Such, haply, yon ITALIAN Maid,
Our Lady's laggard Votaress,
Halting beneath the chestnut shade
To accomplish there her loveliness :
Nice aid maternal fingers lend ;
A Sister serves with slacker hand ;
Then, glittering like a star, she joins the festal band.

III

How blest (if truth may entertain
Coy fancy with a bolder strain)
The HELVETIAN Girl—who daily braves,
In her light skiff, the tossing waves,
And quits the bosom of the deep
Only to climb the rugged steep !
—Say whence that modulated shout !
From Wood-nymph of Diana's throng ?
Or does the greeting to a rout
Of giddy Bacchanals belong ?
Jubilant outcry ! rock and glade
Resounded—but the voice obeyed
The breath of an Helvetic Maid.

IV

Her beauty dazzles the thick wood ;
Her courage animates the flood ;
Her steps the elastic greensward meets
Returning unreluctant sweets ;
The mountains (as ye heard) rejoice
Aloud, saluted by her voice !
Blithe Paragon of Alpine grace,
Be as thou art—for through thy veins

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The blood of Heroes runs its race !
 And nobly wilt thou brook the chains
 That, for the virtuous, Life prepares ;
 The fetters which the Matron wears ;
 The patriot Mother's weight of anxious cares !

" Sweet HIGHLAND Girl ! a very shower
 Of beauty was thy earthly dower,"
 When thou didst flit before mine eyes,
 Gay Vision under sullen skies,
 While Hope and Love around thee played,
 Near the rough falls of Inversneyd !
 Have they, who nursed the blossom, seen
 No breach of promise in the fruit ?
 Was joy, in following joy, as keen
 As grief can be in grief's pursuit ?
 When youth had flown did hope still bless
 Thy goings—or the cheerfulness
 Of innocence survive to mitigate distress ?

VI

But from our course why turn—to tread
 A way with shadows overspread ;
 Where what we gladliest would believe
 Is feared as what may most deceive ?
 Bright Spirit, not with amaranth crowned
 But heath-bells from thy native ground,
 Time cannot thin thy flowing hair,
 Nor take one ray of light from Thee ;
 For in my Fancy thou dost share
 The gift of immortality ;
 And there shall bloom, with Thee allied,
 The Votaress by Lugano's side ;
 And that intrepid Nymph, on Uri's steep desried !

XXVIII

THE COLUMN INTENDED BY BUONAPARTE FOR A
 TRIUMPHAL EDIFICE IN MILAN, NOW LYING BY
 THE WAY-SIDE IN THE SIMPLON PASS

AMBITION—following down this far-famed slope
 Her Pioneer, the snow-dissolving Sun,
 While clarions prate of kingdoms to be won—
 Perchance, in future ages, here may stop ;

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Taught to mistrust her flattering horoscope
By admonition from this prostrate Stone !
Memento uninscribed of Pride o'erthrown ;
Vanity's hieroglyphic ; a choice trope
In Fortune's rhetoric. Daughter of the Rock,
Rest where thy course was stayed by Power divine !
The Soul transported sees, from hint of thine,
Crimes which the great Avenger's hand provoke,
Hears combats whistling o'er the ensanguined heath
What groans ! what shrieks ! what quietness in death.

XXIX

STANZAS

COMPOSED IN THE SIMPLON PASS

VALLOMBROSA ! I longed in thy shadiest wood
To slumber, reclined on the moss-covered floor,
To listen to ANIO's precipitous flood,
When the stillness of evening hath deepened its roar ;
To range through the Temples of PÆSTUM, to muse
In POMPEII preserved by her burial in earth ;
On pictures to gaze where they drank in their hues ;
And murmur sweet songs on the ground of their birth.

The beauty of Florence, the grandeur of Rome,
Could I leave them unseen, and not yield to regret ?
With a hope (and no more) for a season to come,
Which ne'er may discharge the magnificent debt ?
Thou fortunate Region ! whose Greatness inurned
Awoke to new life from its ashes and dust ;
Twice-glorified fields ! if in sadness I turned
From your infinite marvels, the sadness was just.

Now, risen ere the light-footed Chamois retires
From dew-sprinkled grass to heights guarded with snow,
Toward the mists that hang over the land of my Sires,
From the climate of myrtles contented I go.
My thoughts become bright like yon edging of Pines
On the steep's lofty verge : how it blackened the air !
But, touched from behind by the Sun, it now shines
With threads that seem part of his own silver hair.

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Though the toil of the way with dear Friends we divide,
Though by the same zephyr our temples be fanned
As we rest in the cool orange-bower side by side,
A yearning survives which few hearts shall withstand;
Each step hath its value while homeward we move ;—
O joy when the girdle of England appears !
What moment in life is so conscious of love,
Of love in the heart made more happy by tears ?

XXX

ECHO, UPON THE GEMMI

WHAT beast of chase hath broken from the cover ?
Stern GEMMI listens to as full a cry,
As multitudinous a harmony
Of sounds as rang the heights of Latmos over,
When, from the soft couch of her sleeping Lover,
Up-starting, Cynthia skimmed the mountain dew
In keen pursuit—and gave, where'er she flew,
Impetuous motion to the Stars above her.
A solitary Wolf-dog, ranging on
Through the bleak concave, wakes this wondrous chime
Of æry voices locked in unison,—
Faint—far-off—near—deep—solemn and sublime !—
So, from the body of one guilty deed,
A thousand ghostly fears, and haunting thoughts, proceed !

XXXI

PROCESSIONS

SUGGESTED ON A SABBATH MORNING IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNY

To appease the Gods ; or public thanks to yield ;
Or to solicit knowledge of events,
Which in her breast Futurity concealed ;
And that the past might have its true intents
Feelingly told by living monuments—
Mankind of yore were prompted to devise
Rites such as yet Persepolis presents
Graven on her cankered walls, solemnities
That moved in long array before admiring eyes.
The Hebrews thus, carrying in joyful state
Thick boughs of palm, and willows from the brook,
Marched round the altar—to commemorate
How, when their course they through the desert took,
Guided by signs which ne'er the sky forsook,

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They lodged in leafy tents and cabins low ;
Green boughs were borne, while, for the blast that shook
Down to the earth the walls of Jericho,
Shouts rise, and storms of sound from lifted trumpets blow !

And thus, in order, 'mid the sacred grove
Fed in the Libyan waste by gushing wells,
The priests and damsels of Ammonian Jove
Provoked responses with shrill canticles ;
While, in a ship begirt with silver bells,
They round his altar bore the hornèd God,
Old Cham, the solar Deity, who dwells
Aloft, yet in a tilting vessel rode,
When universal sea the mountains overflowed.

Why speak of Roman Poms ? the haughty claims
Of Chiefs triumphant after ruthless wars ;
The feast of Neptune—and the Cereal Games,
With images, and crowns, and empty cars ;
The dancing Salii—on the shields of Mars
Smiting with fury ; and a deeper dread
Scattered on all sides by the hideous jars
Of Corybantian cymbals, while the head
Of Cybelè was seen, sublimely turreted !

At length a Spirit more subdued and soft
Appeared—to govern Christian pageantries :
The Cross, in calm procession, borne aloft
Moved to the chant of sober litanies.
Even such, this day, came wafted on the breeze
From a long train—in hooded vestments fair
Enwrapt—and winding, between Alpine trees
Spiry and dark, around their House of prayer,
Below the icy bed of bright ARGENTIERE.

Still in the vivid freshness of a dream,
The pageant haunts me as it met our eyes !
Still, with those white-robed Shapes—a living Stream,
The glacier Pillars join in solemn guise
For the same service, by mysterious ties ;
Numbers exceeding credible account
Of number, pure and silent Votaries
Issuing or issued from a wintry fount ;
The impenetrable heart of that exalted Mount !

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They, too, who send so far a holy gleam
While they the Church engird with motion slow,
A product of that awful Mountain seem,
Poured from his vaults of everlasting snow ;
Not virgin lilies marshalled in bright row,
Not swans descending with the stealthy tide,
A livelier sisterly resemblance show
Than the fair Forms, that in long order glide,
Bear to the glacier band—those Shapes aloft desried,

Trembling, I look upon the secret springs
Of that licentious craving in the mind
To act the God among external things,
To bind, on apt suggestion, or unbind ;
And marvel not that antique Faith inclined
To crowd the world with metamorphosis,
Vouchsafed in pity or in wrath assigned ;
Such insolent temptations wouldst thou miss,
Avoid these sights ; nor brood o'er Fable's dark abyss !

XXXII

ELEGIAC STANZAS ¹

LULLED by the sound of pastoral bells,
Rude Nature's Pilgrims did we go,
From the dread summit of the Queen ²
Of mountains, through a deep ravine,
Where, in her holy chapel, dwells
“ Our Lady of the Snow.”

The sky was blue, the air was mild ;
Free were the streams and green the bowers ;

¹ The lamented Youth whose untimely death gave occasion to these elegiac verses, was Frederick William Goddard, from Boston in North America. We met at Lucerne the succeeding evening, and Mr. G. and his fellow-student became our travelling companions for a couple of days. We ascended the Righi together ; and, after contemplating the sunrise from that noble mountain, we separated at an hour and on a spot well suited to the parting of those who were to meet no more. Our party descended through the valley of our Lady of the Snow, and our late companions, to Art. We had hoped to meet in a few weeks at Geneva ; but on the third succeeding day (on the 21st of August) Mr. Goddard perished, being overset in a boat while crossing the lake of Zurich.

² Mount Righi—Regina Montium.

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As if, to rough assaults unknown,
The genial spot had *ever* shown
A countenance that as sweetly smiled—
The face of summer-hours.

And we were gay, our hearts at ease ;
With pleasure dancing through the frame
We journeyed ; all we knew of care—
Our path that straggled here and there
Of trouble—but the fluttering breeze ;
Of Winter—but a name.

If foresight could have rent the veil
Of three short days—but hush—no more !
Calm is the grave, and calmer none
Than that to which thy cares are gone,
Thou Victim of the stormy gale ;
Asleep on ZÜRICH's shore !

O GODDARD ! what art thou ?—a name—
A sunbeam followed by a shade !
Nor more, for aught that time supplies,
The great, the experienced, and the wise :
Too much from this frail earth we claim,
And therefore are betrayed.

We met, while festive mirth ran wild,
Where, from a deep lake's mighty urn,
Forth slips, like an enfranchised slave,
A sea-green river, proud to lave,
With current swift and undefiled,
The towers of old LUCERNE.

We parted upon solemn ground
Far-lifted towards the unfading sky ;
But all our thoughts were *then* of Earth,
That gives to common pleasures birth ;
And nothing in our hearts we found
That prompted even a sigh.

Fetch, sympathising Powers of air,
Fetch, ye that post o'er seas and lands,
Herbs, moistened by Virginian dew,
A most untimely grave to strew,
Whose turf may never know the care
Of *kindred* human hands !

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Beloved by every gentle Muse
He left his Transatlantic home :
Europe, a realised romance,
Had opened on his eager glance ;
What present bliss !—what golden views !
What stores for years to come !

Though lodged within no vigorous frame,
His soul her daily tasks renewed,
Blithe as the lark on sun-gilt wings
High poised—or as the wren that sings
In shady places, to proclaim
Her modest gratitude.

Not vain in sadly-uttered praise ;
The words of truth's memorial vow
Are sweet as morning fragrance shed
From flowers 'mid GOLDAU's ruins bred ;
As evening's fondly-lingering rays,
On RIGHT's silent brow.

Lamented Youth ! to thy cold clay
Fit obsequies the Stranger paid ;
And piety shall guard the Stone
Which hath not left the spot unknown
Where the wild waves resigned their prey—
And *that* which marks thy bed.

And, when thy Mother weeps for Thee
Lost Youth ! a solitary Mother ;
This tribute from a casual Friend
A not unwelcome aid may lend,
To feed the tender luxury,
The rising pang to smother.

XXXIII

SKY-PROSPECT—FROM THE PLAIN OF FRANCE

Lo ! in the burning west, the craggy nape
Of a proud Ararat ! and, thereupon,
The Ark, her melancholy voyage done !
Yon rampant cloud mimics a lion's shape ;
There, combats a huge crocodile—again.
A golden spear to swallow ! and that brown
And massy grove, so near yon blazing town,
Stirs and recedes—destruction to escape !
Yet all is harmless—as the Elysian shades
Where Spirits dwell in undisturbed repose—

Memorials of Tour on the Continent 38

Silently disappears, or quickly fades :
Meek Nature's evening comment on the shows
That for oblivion take their daily birth
From all the fuming vanities of Earth !

XXXIV

ON BEING STRANDED NEAR THE HARBOUR OF BOULOGNE

WHY cast ye back upon the Gallic shore,
Ye furious waves ! a patriotic Son
Of England—who in hope her coast had won,
His project crowned, his pleasant travel o'er ?
Well—let him pace this noted beach once more,
That gave the Roman his triumphal shells ;
That saw the Corsican his cap and bells
Haughtily shake, a dreaming Conqueror !—
Enough : my Country's cliffs I can behold,
And proudly think, beside the chafing sea,
Of checked ambition, tyranny controlled,
And folly cursed with endless memory :
These local recollections ne'er can cloy ;
Such ground I from my very heart enjoy !

XXXV

AFTER LANDING—THE VALLEY OF DOVER Nov. 1820

WHERE be the noisy followers of the game
Which faction breeds ; the turmoil where ? that passed
Through Europe, echoing from the newsman's blast,
And filled our hearts with grief for England's shame.
Peace greets us ;—rambling on without an aim
We mark majestic herds of cattle, free
To ruminate, couched on the grassy lea ;
And hear far-off the mellow horn proclaim
The Season's harmless pastime. Ruder sound
Stirs not ; enrapt I gaze with strange delight,
While consciousnesses, not to be disowned,
Here only serve a feeling to invite
That lifts the spirit to a calmer height,
And makes this rural stillness more profound.

XXXVI

AT DOVER

FROM the Pier's head, musing, and with increase
Of wonder, I have watched this sea-side Town,
Under the white cliff's battlemented crown,
o 203

382 Memorials of Tour on the Continent

Hushed to a depth of more than Sabbath peace :
 The streets and quays are thronged, but why disown
 Their natural utterance : whence this strange release
 From social noise—silence elsewhere unknown?—
 A Spirit whispered, "Let all wonder cease ;
 Ocean's o'erpowering murmurs have set free
 Thy sense from pressure of life's common din ;
 As the dread Voice that speaks from out the sea
 Of God's eternal Word, the Voice of Time
 Doth deaden, shocks of tumult, shrieks of crime,
 The shouts of folly, and the groans of sin."

XXXVII

DESULTORY STANZAS

UPON RECEIVING THE PRECEDING SHEETS FROM THE PRESS

Is then the final page before me spread,
 Nor further outlet left to mind or heart ?
 Presumptuous Book ! too forward to be read,
 How can I give thee licence to depart ?
 One tribute more : unbidden feelings start
 Forth from their coverts ; slighted objects rise ;
 My spirit is the scene of such wild art
 As on Parnassus rules, when lightning flies,
 Visibly leading on the thunder's harmonies.

All that I saw returns upon my view,
 All that I heard comes back upon my ear,
 All that I felt this moment doth renew ;
 And where the foot with no unmanly fear
 Recoiled—and wings alone could travel—there.
 I move at ease ; and meet contending themes
 That press upon me, crossing the career
 Of recollections vivid as the dreams
 Of midnight,—cities, plains, forests, and mighty streams.

Where Mortal never breathed I dare to sit
 Among the interior Alps, gigantic crew,
 Who triumphed o'er diluvian power !—and yet.
 What are they but a wreck and residue,
 Whose only business is to perish?—true
 To which sad course, these wrinkled Sons of Time
 Labour their proper greatness to subdue ;
 Speaking of death alone, beneath a clime
 Where life and rapture flow in plenitude sublime.

Memorials of Tour on the Continent 383

Fancy hath flung for me an airy bridge
Across thy long deep Valley, furious Rhone!
Arch that *here* rests upon the granite ridge
Of Monte Rosa—*there* on frailer stone
Of secondary birth, the Jung-frau's cone;
And, from that arch, down-looking on the Vale
The aspect I behold of every zone;
A sea of foliage, tossing with the gale,
Blithe Autumn's purple crown, and Winter's icy mail!

Far as ST. MAURICE, from yon eastern FORKS,¹
Down the main avenue my sight can range:
And all its branchy vales, and all that lurks
Within them, church, and town, and hut, and grange,
For my enjoyment meet in vision strange;
Snows, torrents;—to the region's utmost bound,
Life, Death, in amicable interchange;—
But list! the avalanche—the hush profound
That follows—yet more awful than that awful sound!

Is not the chamois suited to his place?
The eagle worthy of her ancestry?
—Let Empires fall! but ne'er shall Ye disgrace
Your noble birthright, ye that occupy
Your council-seats beneath the open sky,
On Sarnen's Mount, there judge of fit and right,
In simple democratic majesty;
Soft breezes fanning your rough brows—the might
And purity of nature spread before your sight!

From this appropriate Court, renowned LUCERNE
Calls me to pace her honoured Bridge—that cheers
The Patriot's heart with pictures rude and stern,
An uncouth Chronicle of glorious years.
Like portraiture, from loftier source, endears
That work of kindred frame, which spans the lake
Just at the point of issue, where it fears
The form and motion of a stream to take;
Where it begins to stir, *yet* voiceless as a snake.

Volumes of sound, from the Cathedral rolled,
This long-roofed Vista penetrate—but see,
One after one, its tablets, that unfold
The whole design of Scripture history;

¹ At the head of the Vallais.

384 Voyage down the Rhine

From the first tasting of the fatal Tree,
Till the bright Star appeared in eastern skies,
Announcing, ONE was born mankind to free ;
His acts, his wrongs, his final sacrifice ;
Lessons for every heart, a Bible for all eyes.

Our pride misleads, our timid likings kill.
—Long may these homely Works devised of old,
These simple efforts of Helvetian skill,
Aid, with congenial influence, to uphold
The State,—the Country's destiny to mould ;
Turning, for them who pass, the common dust
Of servile opportunity to gold ;
Filling the soul with sentiments august—
The beautiful, the brave, the holy, and the just !

No more ; Time halts not in his noiseless march—
Nor turns, nor winds, as doth the liquid flood ;
Life slips from underneath us, like that arch
Of airy workmanship whereon we stood,
Earth stretched below, heaven in our neighbourhood.
Go forth, my little Book ! pursue thy way ;
Go forth, and please the gentle and the good ;
Nor be a whisper stifled, if it say
That treasures, yet untouched, may grace some future Lay.

AUTHOR'S VOYAGE DOWN THE RHINE (THIRTY YEARS AGO)

THE confidence of Youth our only Art,
And Hope gay Pilot of the bold design,
We saw the living Landscapes of the Rhine,
Reach after reach, salute us and depart ;
Slow sink the Spires,—and up again they start !
But who shall count the Towers as they recline
O'er the dark steeps, or on the horizon line
Striding, with shattered crests, the eye athwart ?
More touching still, more perfect was the pleasure,
When hurrying forward till the slack'ning stream
Spread like a spacious Mere, we there could measure
A smooth free course along the watery gleam,
Think calmly on the past, and mark at leisure
Features which else had vanished like a dream.

THE RIVER DUDDON

A SERIES OF SONNETS¹

1820

To

THE REV. DR. WORDSWORTH

(WITH THE SONNETS TO THE RIVER DUDDON, AND OTHER POEMS
IN THIS COLLECTION, 1820)

THE Minstrels played their Christmas tune
To-night beneath my cottage-eaves;
While, smitten by a lofty moon,
The encircling laurels, thick with leaves,
Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen,
That overpowered their natural green.

Through hill and valley every breeze
Had sunk to rest with folded wings:
Keen was the air, but could not freeze,
Nor check, the music of the strings;
So stout and hardy were the band
That scraped the chords with strenuous hand;

And who but listened?—till was paid
Respect to every Inmate's claim:
The greeting given, the music played,
In honour of each household name,
Duly pronounced with lusty call,
And "merry Christmas" wished to all!

O Brother! I revere the choice
That took thee from thy native hills;
And it is given thee to rejoice:
Though public care full often tills
(Heaven only witness of the toil)
A barren and ungrateful soil.

Yet, would that Thou, with me and mine,
Hadst heard this never-failing rite;
And seen on other faces shine
A true revival of the light
Which Nature and these rustic Powers,
In simple childhood, spread through ours.

For pleasure hath not ceased to wait
On these expected annual rounds;
Whether the rich man's sumptuous gate
Call forth the unelaborate sounds,
Or they are offered at the door
That guards the lowliest of the poor.

¹ The river Duddon rises upon Wrynose Fell, on the confines of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Lancashire; and, having served as a boundary to the last two counties for the space of about twenty-five miles, enters the Irish Sea, between the Isle of Walney and the Lordship of Millum.

The River Duddon

How touching, when, at midnight, sweep
 Snow-muffled winds, and all is dark,
 To hear—and sink again to sleep !
 Or, at an earlier call, to mark,
 By blazing fire, the still suspense
 Of self-complacent innocence ;

The mutual nod,—the grave disguise
 Of hearts with gladness brimming o'er ;
 And some unbidden tears that rise
 For names once heard, and heard no more ;
 Tears brightened by the serenade
 For infant in the cradle laid.

Ah ! not for emerald fields alone,
 With ambient streams more pure and bright
 Than fabled Cytherea's zone
 Glittering before the Thunderer's sight,
 Is to my heart of hearts endeared
 The ground where we were born and reared !

Hail, ancient Manners ! sure defence,
 Where they survive, of wholesome laws ;
 Remnants of love whose modest sense
 Thus into narrow room withdraws ;
 Hail, Usages of pristine mould,
 And ye that guard them, Mountains old !

Bear with me, Brother ! quench the thought
 That slights this passion, or condemns ;
 If thee fond Fancy ever brought
 From the proud margin of the Thames,
 And Lambeth's venerable towers,
 To humbler streams, and greener bowers.

Yes, they can make, who fail to find,
 Short leisure even in busiest days ;
 Moments, to cast a look behind,
 And profit by those kindly rays
 That through the clouds do sometimes steal,
 And all the far-off past reveal.

Hence, while the imperial City's din
 Beats frequent on thy satiate ear,
 A pleased attention I may win
 To agitations less severe,
 That neither overwhelm nor cloy,
 But fill the hollow vale with joy !

Not envying Latian shades—if yet they throw
 A grateful coolness round that crystal Spring,
 Blandusia, prattling as when long ago
 The Sabine Bard was moved her praise to sing ;

Careless of flowers that in perennial blow
Round the moist marge of Persian fountains cling ;
Heedless of Alpine torrents thundering
Through ice-built arches radiant as heaven's bow ;
I seek the birthplace of a native Stream.—
All hail, ye mountains ! hail, thou morning light !
Better to breathe at large on this clear height
Than toil in needless sleep from dream to dream :
Pure flow the verse, pure, vigorous, free, and bright,
For Duddon, long-loved Duddon, is my theme !

CHILD of the clouds ! remote from every taint
Of sordid industry thy lot is cast ;
Thine are the honours of the lofty waste
Not seldom, when with heat the valleys faint,
Thy handmaid Frost with spangled tissue quaint
Thy cradle decks ;—to chant thy birth, thou hast
No meaner Poet than the whistling Blast,
And Desolation is thy Patron-saint !
She guards thee, ruthless Power ! who would not spare,
Those mighty forests, once the bison's screen,
Where stalked the huge deer to his shaggy lair¹
Through paths and alleys roofed with darkest green ;
Thousands of years before the silent air
Was pierced by whizzing shaft of hunter keen !

III

How shall I paint thee ?—Be this naked stone
My seat, while I give way to such intent ;
Pleased could my verse, a speaking monument,
Make to the eyes of men thy features known.
But as of all those tripping lambs not one
O outruns his fellows, so hath Nature lent
To thy beginning nought that doth present
Peculiar ground for hope to build upon.
To dignify the spot that gives thee birth,
No sign of hoar Antiquity's esteem
Appears, and none of modern Fortune's care ;
Yet thou thyself hast round thee shed a gleam
Of brilliant moss, instinct with freshness rare ;
Prompt offering to thy Foster-mother, Earth !

¹ The deer alluded to is the Leigh, a gigantic species long since extinct.

IV

TAKE, cradled Nursling of the mountain, take
 This parting glance, no negligent adieu !
 A Protean change seems wrought while I pursue
 The curves, a loosely-scattered chain doth make ;
 Or rather thou appear'st a glistening snake,
 Silent, and to the gazer's eye untrue,
 Thridding with sinuous lapse the rushes, through
 Dwarf willows gliding, and by ferny brake.
 Starts from a dizzy steep the undaunted Rill
 Robed instantly in garb of snow-white foam ;
 And laughing dares the Adventurer, who hath clomb
 So high, a rival purpose to fulfil ;
 Else let the dastard backward wend, and roam,
 Seeking less bold achievement, where he will !

V

SOLE listener, Duddon ! to the breeze that played
 With thy clear voice, I caught the fitful sound
 Wafted o'er sullen moss and craggy mound—
 Unfruitful solitudes, that seemed to upbraid
 The sun in heaven !—but now, to form a shade
 For Thee, green alders have together wound
 Their foliage ; ashes flung their arms around ;
 And birch-trees risen in silver colonnade.
 And thou hast also tempted here to rise,
 'Mid sheltering pines, this Cottage rude and grey ;
 Whose ruddy children, by the mother's eyes
 Carelessly watched, sport through the summer day,
 Thy pleased associates :—light as endless May
 On infant bosoms lonely Nature lies.

VI

FLOWERS

ERE yet our course was graced with social trees
 It lacked not old remains of hawthorn bowers,
 Where small birds warbled to their paramours ;
 And, earlier still, was heard the hum of bees ;
 I saw them ply their harmless robberies,
 And caught the fragrance which the sundry flowers,
 Fed by the stream with soft perpetual showers,
 Plenteously yielded to the vagrant breeze.
 There bloomed the strawberry of the wilderness ;
 The trembling eyebright showed her sapphire blue,

The thyme her purple, like the blush of Even ;
And if the breath of some to no caress
Invited, forth they peeped so fair to view,
All kinds alike seemed favourites of Heaven.

VII

"CHANGE me, some God, into that breathing rose !"
The love-sick Stripling fancifully sighs,
The envied flower beholding, as it lies
On Laura's breast, in exquisite repose ;
Or he would pass into her bird, that throws
The darts of song from out its wiry cage ;
Enraptured,—could he for himself engage
The thousandth part of what the Nymph bestows ;
And what the little careless innocent
Ungraciously receives. Too daring choice !
There are whose calmer mind it would content
To be an unculled floweret of the glen,
Fearless of plough and scythe ; or darkling wren
That tunes on Duddon's banks her slender voice.

VIII

WHAT aspect bore the Man who roved or fled,
First of his tribe, to this dark dell—who first
In this pellucid Current slaked his thirst ?
What hopes came with him ? what designs were spread
Along his path ? His unprotected bed
What dreams encompassed ? Was the intruder nursed
In hideous usages, and rites accursed,
That thinned the living and disturbed the dead ?
No voice replies ;—both air and earth are mute ;
And Thou, blue Streamlet, murmuring yield'st no more
Than a soft record, that, whatever fruit
Of ignorance thou might'st witness heretofore,
Thy function was to heal and to restore,
To soothe and cleanse, not madden and pollute !

IX

THE STEPPING-STONES

THE struggling Rill insensibly is grown
Into a Brook of loud and stately march,
Crossed ever and anon by plank or arch ;
And, for like use, lo ! what might seem a zone
Chosen for ornament—stone matched with stone

In studied symmetry, with interspace
 For the clear waters to pursue their race
 Without restraint. How swiftly have they flown,
 Succeeding—still succeeding ! Here the Child
 Puts, when the high-swoln Flood runs fierce and wild,
 His budding courage to the proof ; and here
 Declining Manhood learns to note the sly
 And sure encroachments of infirmity,
 Thinking how fast time runs, life's end how near !

THE SAME SUBJECT

Nor so that Pair whose youthful spirits dance
 With prompt emotion, urging them to pass ;
 A sweet confusion checks the Shepherd-lass ;
 Blushing she eyes the dizzy flood askance ;
 To stop ashamed—too timid to advance ;
 She ventures once again—another pause !
 His outstretched hand He tauntingly withdraws—
 She sues for help with piteous utterance !
 Chidden she chides again ; the thrilling touch
 Both feel, when he renews the wished-for aid :
 Ah ! if their fluttering hearts should stir too much,
 Should beat too strongly, both may be betrayed.
 The frolic Loves, who, from yon high rock, see
 The struggle, clap their wings for victory !

XI

THE FAERY CHASM

No fiction was it of the antique age :
 A sky-blue stone, within this sunless cleft,
 Is of the very footmarks unbereft
 Which tiny Elves impressed ;—on that smooth stage
 Dancing with all their brilliant equipage
 In secret revels—haply after theft
 Of some sweet Babe—Flower stolen, and coarse Weed left
 For the distracted Mother to assuage
 Her grief with, as she might !—But, where, oh ! where
 Is traceable a vestige of the notes
 That ruled those dances wild in character ?—
 Deep underground ? Or in the upper air,
 On the shrill wind of midnight ? or where floats
 O'er twilight fields the autumnal gossamer ?

XII

HINTS FOR THE FANCY

ON, loitering Muse—the swift Stream chides us—on !
Albeit his deep-worn channel doth immure
Objects immense portrayed in miniature,
Wild shapes for many a strange comparison !
Niagaras, Alpine passes, and anon
Abodes of Naiads, calm abysses pure,
Bright liquid mansions, fashioned to endure
When the broad oak drops, a leafless skeleton,
And the solidities of mortal pride,
Palace and tower, are crumbled into dust !—
The Bard who walks with Duddon for his guide,
Shall find such toys of fancy thickly set :
Turn from the sight, enamoured Muse—we must ;
And, if thou canst, leave them without regret !

XIII

OPEN PROSPECT

HAIL to the fields—with Dwellings sprinkled o'er,
And one small hamlet, under a green hill
Clustering, with barn and byre, and spouting mill !
A glance suffices ;—should we wish for more,
Gay June would scorn us. But when bleak winds roar
Through the stiff lance-like shoots of pollard ash,
Dread swell of sound ! loud as the gusts that lash
The matted forests of Ontario's shore
By wasteful steel unsmitten—then would I
Turn into port ; and, reckless of the gale,
Reckless of angry Duddon sweeping by,
While the warm hearth exalts the mantling ale,
Laugh with the generous household heartily
At all the merry pranks of Donnerdale !

XIV

O MOUNTAIN Stream ! the Shepherd and his Cot
Are privileged Inmates of deep solitude ;
Nor would the nicest Anchorite exclude
A field or two of brighter green, or plot
Of tillage-ground, that seemeth like a spot
Of stationary sunshine :—thou hast viewed
These only, Duddon ! with their paths renewed
By fits and starts, yet this contents thee not.
Thee hath some awful Spirit impelled to leave,
Utterly to desert, the haunts of men,

Though simple thy companions were and few ;
 And through this wilderness a passage cleave
 Attended but by thy own voice, save when
 The clouds and fowls of the air thy way pursue !

(1806)

XV

FROM this deep chasm, where quivering sunbeams play
 Upon its loftiest crags, mine eyes behold
 A gloomy NICHE, capacious, blank, and cold ;
 A concave free from shrubs and mosses grey ;
 In semblance fresh, as if, with dire affray,
 Some Statue, placed amid these regions old
 For tutelary service, thence had rolled,
 Startling the flight of timid Yesterday !
 Was it by mortals sculptured ?—weary slaves
 Of slow endeavour ! or abruptly cast
 Into rude shape by fire, with roaring blast
 Tempestuously let loose from central caves ?
 Or fashioned by the turbulence of waves,
 Then, when o'er highest hills the Deluge passed ?

XVI

AMERICAN TRADITION

SUCH fruitless questions may not long beguile
 Or plague the fancy 'mid the sculptured shows
 Conspicuous yet where Oroonoko flows ;
There would the Indian answer with a smile
 Aimed at the White Man's ignorance, the while,
 Of the GREAT WATERS telling how they rose,
 Covered the plains, and, wandering where they chose,
 Mounted through every intricate defile,
 Triumphant—Inundation wide and deep,
 O'er which his Fathers urged, to ridge and steep
 Else unapproachable, their buoyant way ;
 And carved, on mural cliff's undreaded side,
 Sun, moon, and stars, and beast of chase or prey ;
 Whate'er they sought, shunned, loved, or deified !¹

XVII

RETURN

A DARK plume fetch me from yon blasted yew,
 Perched on whose top the Danish Raven croaks ;
 Aloft, the imperial Bird of Rome invokes
 Departed ages, shedding where he flew

¹ See Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*.

Loose fragments of wild wailing, that bestrew
 The clouds and thrill the chambers of the rocks ;
 And into silence hush the timorous flocks,
 That, calmly couching while the nightly dew
 Moistened each fleece, beneath the twinkling stars
 Slept amid that lone Camp on Hardknot's height,
 Whose Guardians bent the knee to Jove and Mars :
 Or, near that mystic Round of Druid frame
 Tardily sinking by its proper weight
 Deep into patient Earth, from whose smooth breast it came !

XVIII

SEATHWAITE CHAPEL

SACRED Religion ! "mother of form and fear,"
 Dread arbitress of mutable respect,
 New rites ordaining when the old are wrecked,
 Or cease to please the fickle worshipper ;
 Mother of Love ! (that name best suits thee here)
 Mother of Love ! for this deep vale, protect
 Truth's holy lamp, pure source of bright effect,
 Gifted to purge the vapoury atmosphere
 That seeks to stifle it ;—as in those days
 When this low Pile a Gospel Teacher knew,
 Whose good works formed an endless retinue :
 A Pastor such as Chaucer's verse portrays ;
 Such as the heaven-taught skill of Herbert drew ;
 And tender Goldsmith crowned with deathless praise !

XIX

TRIBUTARY STREAM

My frame hath often trembled with delight
 When hope presented some far-distant good,
 That seemed from heaven descending, like the flood
 Of yon pure waters, from their æry height
 Hurrying, with lordly Duddon to unite ;
 Who, 'mid a world of images imprest
 On the calm depth of his transparent breast,
 Appears to cherish most that Torrent white,
 The fairest, softest, liveliest of them all !
 And seldom hath ear listened to a tune
 More lulling than the busy hum of Noon,
 Swoln by that voice—whose murmur musical
 Announces to the thirsty fields a boon
 Dewy and fresh, till showers again shall fall.

XX

THE PLAIN OF DONNERDALE

THE old inventive Poets, had they seen,
 Or rather felt, the entrancement that detains¹
 Thy waters, Duddon ! 'mid these flowery plains—
 The still repose, the liquid lapse serene,
 Transferred to bowers imperishably green,
 Had beautified Elysium ! But these chains
 Will soon be broken ;—a rough course remains,
 Rough as the past ; where Thou, of placid mien,
 Innocuous as a firstling of the flock,
 And countenanced like a soft cerulean sky,
 Shalt change thy temper ; and, with many a shock
 Given and received in mutual jeopardy,
 Dance, like a Bacchanal, from rock to rock,
 Tossing her frantic thyrsus wide and high !

XXI

WHENCE that low voice ?—A whisper from the heart,
 That told of days long past, when here I roved
 With friends and kindred tenderly beloved ;
 Some who had early mandates to depart,
 Yet are allowed to steal my path athwart
 By Duddon's side ; once more do we unite,
 Once more, beneath the kind Earth's tranquil light ;
 And smothered joys into new being start.
 From her unworthy seat, the cloudy stall
 Of Time, breaks forth triumphant Memory ;
 Her glistening tresses bound, yet light and free
 As golden locks of birch, that rise and fall
 On gales that breathe too gently to recall
 Aught of the fading year's inclemency !

XXII

TRADITION

A LOVE-LÖRN Maid, at some far-distant time,
 Came to this hidden pool, whose depths surpass
 In crystal clearness Dian's looking-glass ;
 And, gazing, saw that Rose, which from the prime
 Derives its name, reflected, as the chime
 Of echo doth reverberate some sweet sound :
 The starry treasure from the blue profound
 She longed to ravish ;—shall she plunge, or climb
 The humid precipice, and seize the guest

Of April, smiling high in upper air?
Desperate alternative! what fiend could dare
To prompt the thought?—Upon the steep rock's breast
The lonely Primrose yet renews its bloom,
Untouched memento of her hapless doom!

XXIII

SHEEP-WASHING

SAD thoughts, avaunt!—partake we their blithe cheer
Who gathered in betimes the unshorn flock
To wash the fleece, where haply bands of rock,
Checking the stream, make a pool smooth and clear
As this we look on. Distant Mountains hear,
Hear and repeat, the turmoil that unites
Clamour of boys with innocent despites
Of barking dogs, and bleatings from strange fear.
And what if Duddon's spotless flood receive
Unwelcome mixtures as the uncouth noise
Thickens, the pastoral River will forgive
Such wrong; nor need *we* blame the licensed joys,
Though false to Nature's quiet equipoise:
Frank are the sports, the stains are fugitive.

XXIV

THE RESTING-PLACE

MID-NOON is past;—upon the sultry mead
No zephyr breathes, no cloud its shadow throws:
If we advance unstrengthened by repose,
Farewell the solace of the vagrant reed!
This Nook—with woodbine hung and straggling weed
Tempting recess as ever pilgrim chose,
Half grot, half arbour—proffers to enclose
Body and mind, from molestation freed,
In narrow compass—narrow as itself:
Or if the Fancy, too industrious Elf,
Be loth that we should breathe awhile exempt
From new incitements friendly to our task,
Here wants not stealthy prospect, that may tempt
Loose Idless to forego her wily mask.

XXV

METHINKS 'twere no unprecedented feat
Should some benignant Minister of air
Lift, and encircle with a cloudy chair,

The One for whom my heart shall ever beat
 With tenderest love ;—or, if a safer seat
 Atween his downy wings be furnished, there
 Would lodge her, and the cherished burden bear
 O'er hill and valley to this dim retreat !
 Rough ways my steps have trod ;—too rough and long
 For her companionship ; here dwells soft ease :
 With sweets that she partakes not some distaste
 Mingles, and lurking consciousness of wrong ;
 Languish the flowers ; the waters seem to waste
 Their vocal charm ; their sparklings cease to please.

XXVI

RETURN, Content ! for fondly I pursued,
 Even when a child, the Streams—unheard, unseen ;
 Through tangled woods, impending rocks between ;
 Or, free as air, with flying inquest viewed
 The sullen reservoirs whence their bold brood—
 Pure as the morning, fretful, boisterous, keen,
 Green as the salt-sea billows, white and green—
 Poured down the hills, a choral multitude !
 Nor have I tracked their course for scanty gains ;
 They taught me random cares and truant joys,
 That shield from mischief and preserve from stains
 Vague minds, while men are growing out of boys ;
 Maturer Fancy owes to their rough noise
 Impetuous thoughts that brook not servile reins.

XXVII

FALLEN, and diffused into a shapeless heap,
 Or quietly self-buried in earth's mould,
 Is that embattled House, whose massy Keep,
 Flung from yon cliff a shadow large and cold.
 There dwelt the gay, the bountiful, the bold ;
 Till nightly lamentations, like the sweep
 Of winds—though winds were silent—struck a deep
 And lasting terror through that ancient Hold.
 Its line of Warriors fled ;—they shrunk when tried
 By ghostly power :—but Time's unsparing hand
 Hath plucked such foes, like weeds, from out the land ;
 And now, if men with men in peace abide,
 All other strength the weakest may withstand,
 All worse assaults may safely be defied.

XXVIII

JOURNEY RENEWED

I ROSE while yet the cattle, heat-oppressed,
Crowded together under rustling trees
Brushed by the current of the water-breeze ;
And for *their* sakes, and love of all that rest,
On Duddon's margin, in the sheltering nest ;
For all the startled scaly tribes that slink
Into his coverts, and each fearless link
Of dancing insects forged upon his breast ;
For these, and hopes and recollections worn
Close to the vital seat of human clay ;
Glad meetings, tender partings, that upstay
The drooping mind of absence, by vows sworn
In his pure presence near the trysting thorn—
I thanked the Leader of my onward way.

XXIX

No record tells of lance opposed to lance,
Horse charging horse, 'mid these retired domains ;
Tells that their turf drank purple from the veins
Of heroes, fallen, or struggling to advance,
Till doubtful combat issued in a trance
Of victory, that struck through heart and reins
Even to the inmost seat of mortal pains,
And lightened o'er the pallid countenance.
Yet, to the loyal and the brave, who lie
In the blank earth, neglected and forlorn,
The passing Winds memorial tribute pay ;
The Torrents chant their praise, inspiring scorn
Of power usurped ; with proclamation high,
And glad acknowledgment, of lawful sway.

XXX

Who swerves from innocence, who makes divorce
Of that serene companion—a good name,
Recovers not his loss ; but walks with shame,
With doubt, with fear, and haply with remorse :
And oft-times he—who, yielding to the force
Of chance-temptation, ere his journey end,
From chosen comrade turns, or faithful friend—
In vain shall rue the broken intercourse.
Not so with such as loosely wear the chain
That binds them, pleasant River ! to thy side :—

Through the rough copse wheel thou with hasty stride;
 I choose to saunter o'er the grassy plain,
 Sure, when the separation has been tried,
 That we, who part in love, shall meet again.

XXXI

THE KIRK of ULPHA to the pilgrim's eye
 Is welcome as a star, that doth present
 Its shining forehead through the peaceful rent
 Of a black cloud diffused o'er half the sky :
 Or as a fruitful palm-tree towering high
 O'er the parched waste beside an Arab's tent ;
 Or the Indian tree whose branches, downward bent,
 Take root again, a boundless canopy.
 How sweet were leisure ! could it yield no more
 Than 'mid that wave-washed Churchyard to recline,
 From pastoral graves extracting thoughts divine ;
 Or there to pace, and mark the summits hoar
 Of distant moonlit mountains faintly shine,
 Soothed by the unseen River's gentle roar.

XXXII

Nor hurled precipitous from steep to steep ;
 Lingering no more 'mid flower-enamelled lands
 And blooming thickets ; nor by rocky bands
 Held ; but in radiant progress toward the Deep
 Where mightiest rivers into powerless sleep
 Sink, and forget their nature—*now* expands
 Majestic Duddon, over smooth flat sands
 Gliding in silence with unfettered sweep !
 Beneath an ampler sky a region wide
 Is opened round him :—hamlets, towers, and towns,
 And blue-topped hills, behold him from afar ;
 In stately mien to sovereign Thames allied
 Spreading his bosom under Kentish downs,
 With commerce freighted, or triumphant war.

XXXIII

CONCLUSION

BUT here no cannon thunders to the gale ;
 Upon the wave no haughty pendants cast
 A crimson splendour : lowly is the mast
 That rises here, and humbly spread, the sail ;
 While, less disturbed than in the narrow Vale
 Through which with strange vicissitudes he passed,

A Parsonage in Oxfordshire 399

The Wanderer seeks that receptacle vast
Where all his unambitious functions fail,
And may thy Poet, cloud-born Stream ! be free—
The sweets of earth contentedly resigned,
And each tumultuous working left behind
At seemly distance—to advance like Thee ;
Prepared, in peace of heart, in calm of mind
And soul, to mingle with Eternity !

XXXIV

AFTER-THOUGHT

*I THOUGHT of Thee, my partner and my guide
As being past away.—Vain sympathies !
For, backward, Duddon, as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide ;
Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide ;
The Form remains, the Function never dies ;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish ;—be it so !
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour ;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent
dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.*

A PARSONAGE IN OXFORDSHIRE ¹

WHERE holy ground begins, unhallowed ends,
Is marked by no distinguishable line ;
The turf unites, the pathways intertwine ;
And, wheresoe'er the stealing footstep tends,
Garden, and that domain where kindred, friends,
And neighbours rest together, here confound
Their several features, mingled like the sound
Of many waters, or as evening blends
With shady night. Soft airs, from shrub and flower,
Waft fragrant greetings to each silent grave ;
And while those lofty poplars gently wave
Their tops, between them comes and goes a sky
Bright as the glimpses of eternity,
To saints accorded in their mortal hour.

(1820)

¹ This Parsonage was the residence of my friend Jones, and is particularly described in another note. [See W.'s Prose-writings : vol. i.—*Ed.*]

TO ENTERPRISE

KEEP for the Young the impassioned smile
 Shed from thy countenance, as I see thee stand
 High on that chalky cliff of Britain's Isle,
 A slender volume grasping in thy hand—
 (Perchance the pages that relate
 The various turns of Crusoe's fate)—
 Ah, spare the exulting smile,
 And drop thy pointing finger bright
 As the first flash of beacon light ;
 But neither veil thy head in shadows dim,
 Nor turn thy face away
 From One who, in the evening of his day,
 To thee would offer no presumptuous hymn !

I

Bold Spirit ! who art free to rove
 Among the starry courts of Jove,
 And oft in splendour dost appear
 Embodied to poetic eyes,
 While traversing this nether sphere,
 Where Mortals call thee ENTERPRISE.
 Daughter of Hope ! her favourite Child,
 Whom she to young Ambition bore,
 When hunter's arrow first defiled
 The grove, and stained the turf with gore ;
 Thee wingèd Fancy took, and nursed
 On broad Euphrates' palmy shore,
 And where the mightier Waters burst
 From caves of Indian mountains hoar !
 She wrapped thee in a panther's skin ;
 And Thou, thy favourite food to win,
 The flame-eyed eagle oft wouldst scare
 From her rock-fortress in mid air,
 With infant shout ; and often sweep,
 Paired with the ostrich, o'er the plain ;
 Or, tired with sport, wouldst sink asleep
 Upon the couchant lion's mane !
 With rolling years thy strength increased
 And, far beyond thy native East,
 To thee, by varying titles known
 As variously thy power was shown,
 Did incense-bearing altars rise,
 Which caught the blaze of sacrifice,
 From suppliants panting for the skies !

II

What though this ancient Earth be trod
No more by step of Demi-god
Mounting from glorious deed to deed
As thou from clime to clime didst lead ;
Yet still, the bosom beating high,
And the hushed farewell of an eye
Where no procrastinating gaze
A last infirmity betrays,
Prove that thy heaven-descended sway
Shall ne'er submit to cold decay.
By thy divinity impelled,
The Stripling seeks the tented field ;
The aspiring Virgin kneels ; and, pale
With awe, receives the hallowed veil,
A soft and tender Heroine
Vowed to severer discipline ;
Inflamed by thee, the blooming Boy
Makes of the whistling shrouds a toy,
And of the ocean's dismal breast
A play-ground,—or a couch of rest ;
'Mid the blank world of snow and ice,
Thou to his dangers dost enchain
The Chamois-chaser awed in vain
By chasm or dizzy precipice ;
And hast Thou not with triumph seen
How soaring Mortals glide between
Or through the clouds, and brave the light
With bolder than Icarian flight ?
How they, in bells of crystal, dive—
Where winds and waters cease to strive—
For no unholy visitings,
Among the monsters of the Deep ;
And all the sad and precious things
Which there in ghastly silence sleep ?
Or, adverse tides and currents headed,
And breathless calms no longer dreaded,
In never-slackening voyage go
Straight as an arrow from the bow ;
And, slighting sails and scorning oars,
Keep faith with Time on distant shores ?
—Within our fearless reach are placed
The secrets of the burning Waste ;
Egyptian tombs unlock their dead,
Nile trembles at his fountain head

Thou speak'st—and lo! the polar Seas
 Unbosom their last mysteries.
 —But oh! what transports, what sublime reward,
 Won from the world of mind, dost thou prepare
 For philosophic Sage; or high-souled Bard
 Who, for thy service trained in lonely woods,
 Hath fed on pageants floating through the air,
 Or calentured in depth of limpid floods;
 Nor grieves—tho' doomed thro' silent night to bear
 The domination of his glorious themes,
 Or struggle in the net-work of thy dreams!

III

If there be movements in the Patriot's soul,
 From source still deeper, and of higher worth,
 'Tis thine the quickening impulse to control,
 And in due season send the mandate forth;
 Thy call a prostrate Nation can restore,
 When but a single Mind resolves to crouch no more.

IV

Dread Minister of wrath!
 Who to their destined punishment dost urge
 The Pharaohs of the earth, the men of hardened heart!
 Not unassisted by the flattering stars,
 Thou strew'st temptation o'er the path
 When they in pomp depart
 With trampling horses and refulgent cars—
 Soon to be swallowed by the briny surge;
 Or cast, for lingering death, on unknown strands;
 Or caught amid a whirl of desert sands—
 An Army now, and now a living hill
 That a brief while heaves with convulsive throes—
 Then all is still;
 Or, to forget their madness and their woes,
 Wrapt in a winding-sheet of spotless snows!

V

Back flows the willing current of my Song:
 If to provoke such doom the Impious dare,
 Why should it daunt a blameless prayer?
 —Bold Goddess! range our Youth among;
 Nor let thy genuine impulse fail to beat
 In hearts no longer young;
 Still may a veteran Few have pride
 In thoughts whose sternness makes them sweet;

In fixed resolves by Reason justified ;
That to their object cleave like sleet
Whitening a pine-tree's northern side
When fields are naked far and wide,
And withered leaves, from earth's cold breast
Up-caught in whirlwinds, nowhere can find rest.

VI

But, if such homage thou disdain
As doth with mellowing years agree,
One rarely absent from thy train
More humble favours may obtain
For thy contented Votary.
She, who incites the frolic lambs
In presence of their heedless dams,
And to the solitary fawn
Vouchsafes her lessons, bounteous Nymph
That wakes the breeze, the sparkling lymph
Doth hurry to the lawn ;
She, who inspires that strain of joyance holy
Which the sweet Bird, misnamed the melancholy,
Pours forth in shady groves, shall plead for me ;
And vernal mornings opening bright
With views of undefined delight,
And cheerful songs, and suns that shine
On busy days, with thankful nights, be mine.

VII

But thou, O Goddess ! in thy favourite Isle
(Freedom's impregnable redoubt,
The wide earth's store-house fenced about
With breakers roaring to the gales
That stretch a thousand thousand sails)
Quicken the slothful, and exalt the vile !—
Thy impulse is the life of Fame ;
Glad Hope would almost cease to be
If torn from thy society ;
And Love, when worthiest of his name,
Is proud to walk the earth with Thee !

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS ¹

IN SERIES

1821-22

PART I

FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO BRITAIN,
TO THE CONSUMMATION OF THE PAPAL DOMINION

“A verse may catch a wandering Soul, that flies
Profounder Tracts, and by a liest surprise
Convert delight into a Sacrifice.”

I

INTRODUCION

I, who accompanied with faithful pace
Cerulean Duddon from his cloud-fed spring,
And loved with spirit ruled by his to sing
Of mountain quiet and boon nature's grace ;
I, who essayed the nobler Stream to trace
Of Liberty, and smote the plausible string
Till the checked torrent, proudly triumphing,
Won for herself a lasting resting-place ;
Now seek upon the heights of Time the source
Of a HOLY RIVER, on whose banks are found
Sweet pastoral flowers, and laurels that have crowned
Full oft the unworthy brow of lawless force ;
And, for delight of him who tracks its course,
Immortal amaranth and palms abound.

II

CONJECTURES

IF there be prophets on whose spirits rest
Past things, revealed like future, they can tell
What Powers, presiding o'er the sacred well
Of Christian Faith, this savage Island blessed
With its first bounty. Wandering through the west,
Did holy Paul a while in Britain dwell,
And call the Fountain forth by miracle,
And with dread signs the nascent Stream invest ?
Or He, whose bonds dropped off, whose prison doors
Flew open, by an Angel's voice unbarred ?
Or some of humbler name, to these wild shores
Storm-driven ; who, having seen the cup of woe
Pass from their Master, sojourned here to guard
The precious Current they had taught to flow ?

¹ My purpose in writing this Series was, as much as possible, to confine my view to the introduction, progress, and operation of the Church in England, both previous and subsequent to the Reformation.

III

TREPIDATION OF THE DRUIDS

SCREAMS round the Arch-druid's brow the seamew¹—white
As Menai's foam ; and toward the mystic ring
Where Augurs stand, the Future questioning,
Slowly the cormorant aims her heavy flight,
Portending ruin to each baleful rite,
That, in the lapse of ages, hath crept o'er
Diluvian truths, and patriarchal lore.
Haughty the Bard : can these meek doctrines bight
His transports ? wither his heroic strains ?
But all shall be fulfilled ;—the Julian spear
A way first opened ; and, with Roman chains,
The tidings come of Jesus crucified ;
They come—they spread—the weak, the suffering, hear ;
Receive the faith, and in the hope abide.

IV

DRUIDICAL EXCOMMUNICATION

MERCY and Love have met thee on thy road,
Thou wretched Outcast, from the gift of fire
And food cut off by sacerdotal ire,
From every sympathy that Man bestowed !
Yet shall it claim our reverence, that to God,
Ancient of days ! that to the eternal Sire,
These jealous Ministers of law aspire,
As to the one sole fount whence wisdom flowed,
Justice, and order. Tremblingly escaped,
As if with prescience of the coming storm,
That intimation when the stars were shaped ;
And still, 'mid yon thick woods, the primal truth
Glimmers through many a superstitious form
That fills the Soul with unavailing ruth.

UNCERTAINTY

DARKNESS surrounds us ; seeking, we are lost
On Snowdon's wilds, amid Brigantian coves,
Or where the solitary shepherd roves
Along the plain of Sarum, by the ghost
Of Time and shadows of Tradition, crost ;

¹ This water-fowl was, among the Druids, an emblem of those traditions connected with the Deluge that made an important part of their mysteries. The Cormorant was a bird of bad omen.

And where the boatman of the Western Isles
 Slackens his course—to mark those holy piles
 Which yet survive on bleak Iona's coast.
 Nor these, nor monuments of eldest name,
 Nor Taliesin's unforgotten lays,
 Nor characters of Greek or Roman fame,
 To an unquestionable Source have led ;
 Enough—if eyes, that sought the fountain-head
 In vain, upon the growing Rill may gaze.

VI

PERSECUTION

LAMENT ! for Diocletian's fiery sword
 Works busy as the lightning ; but instinct
 With malice ne'er to deadliest weapon linked
 Which God's ethereal store-houses afford :
 Against the Followers of the incarnate Lord
 It rages ; some are smitten in the field—
 Some pierced to the heart through the ineffectual shield
 Of sacred home ;—with pomp are others gored
 And dreadful respite. Thus was Alban tried,
 England's first Martyr, whom no threats could shake ;
 Self-offered victim, for his friend he died,
 And for the faith ; nor shall his name forsake
 That Hill, whose flowery platform seems to rise
 By Nature decked for holiest sacrifice.

VII

RECOVERY

As, when a storm hath ceased, the birds regain
 Their cheerfulness, and busily retrim
 Their nests, or chant a gratulating hymn
 To the blue ether and bespangled plain ;
 Even so, in many a re-constructed fane,
 Have the survivors of this Storm renewed
 Their holy rites with vocal gratitude :
 And solemn ceremonials they ordain
 To celebrate their great deliverance ;
 Most feelingly instructed 'mid their fear—
 That persecution, blind with rage extreme,
 May not the less, through Heaven's mild countenance,
 Even in her own despite, both feed and cheer ;
 For all things are less dreadful than they seem.

VIII

TEMPTATIONS FROM ROMAN REFINEMENTS

WATCH, and be firm ! for, soul-subduing vice,
Heart-killing luxury, on your steps await.
Fair houses, baths, and banquets delicate,
And temples flashing, bright as polar ice,
Their radiance through the woods—may yet suffice
To sap your hardy virtue, and abate
Your love of Him upon whose forehead sate
The crown of thorns ; whose life-blood flowed, the price
Of your redemption. Shun the insidious arts
That Rome provides, less dreading from her frown
Than from her wily praise, her peaceful gown,
Language, and letters ;—these, though fondly viewed
As humanising graces, are but parts
And instruments of deadliest servitude !

IX

DISSENSIONS

THAT heresies should strike (if truth be scanned
Presumptuously) their roots both wide and deep,
Is natural as dreams to feverish sleep.
Lo ! Discord at the altar dares to stand
Uplifting toward high Heaven her fiery brand,
A cherished Priestess of the new-baptized !
But chastisement shall follow peace despised.
The Pictish cloud darkens the enervate land
By Rome abandoned ; vain are suppliant cries,
And prayers that would undo her forced farewell ;
For she returns not.—Awed by her own knell,
She casts the Britons upon strange Allies
Soon to become more dreaded enemies
Than heartless misery called them to repel.

X

STRUGGLE OF THE BRITONS AGAINST THE BARBARIANS

RISE !—they *have* risen : of brave Aneurin ask
How they have scourged old foes, perfidious friends :
The Spirit of Caractacus descends
Upon the Patriots, animates their task ;—
Amazement runs before the towering casque
Of Arthur, bearing through the stormy field
The virgin sculptured on his Christian shield :—
Stretched in the sunny light of victory bask

The Host that followed Urien as he strode
 O'er heaps of slain ;—from Cambrian wood and moss
 Druids descend, auxiliars of the Cross ;
 Bards, nursed on blue Plinlimmon's still abode,
 Rush on the fight, to harps preferring swords,
 And everlasting deeds to burning words !

XI

SAXON CONQUEST

NOR wants the cause the panic-striking aid
 Of hallelujahs tost from hill to hill—
 For instant victory. But Heaven's high will
 Permits a second and a darker shade
 Of Pagan night. Afflicted and dismayed,
 The Relics of the sword flee to the mountains :
 O wretched Land ! whose tears have flowed like fountains ;
 Whose arts and honours in the dust are laid
 By men yet scarcely conscious of a care
 For other monuments than those of Earth ;
 Who, as the fields and woods have given them birth,
 Will build their savage fortunes only there ;
 Content, if foss, and barrow, and the girth
 Of long-drawn rampart, witness what they were.

XII

MONASTERY OF OLD BANGOR

*THE oppression of the tumult—wrath and scorn—
 The tribulation—and the gleaming blades—*
 Such is the impetuous spirit that pervades
 The song of Taliesin ;—Ours shall mourn
 The *unarmed* Host who by their prayers would turn
 The sword from Bangor's walls, and guard the store
 Of Aboriginal and Roman lore,
 And Christian monuments, that now must burn
 To senseless ashes. Mark ! how all things swerve
 From their known course, or vanish like a dream ;
 Another language spreads from coast to coast ;
 Only perchance some melancholy Stream
 And some indignant Hills old names preserve,
 When laws, and creeds, and people all are lost !

XIII

CASUAL INCITEMENT

A BRIGHT-HAIRED company of youthful slaves,
 Beautiful strangers, stand within the pale

Of a sad market, ranged for public sale,
 Where Tiber's stream the immortal City laves :
 ANGLI by name ; and not an ANGEL waves
 His wing who could seem lovelier to man's eye
 Than they appear to holy Gregory ;
 Who, having learnt that name, salvation craves
 For Them, and for their Land. The earnest Sire,
 His questions urging, feels, in slender ties
 Of chiming sound, commanding sympathies ;
 DE-IRIANS—he would save them from God's IRE ;
 Subjects of Saxon ÆLLA—they shall sing
 Glad HALLE-lujahs to the eternal King !

XIV

GLAD TIDINGS

FOR ever hallowed be this morning fair,
 Blest be the unconscious shore on which ye tread,
 And blest the silver Cross, which ye, instead
 Of martial banner, in procession bear ;
 The Cross preceding Him who floats in air,
 The pictured Saviour !—By Augustin led,
 They come—and onward travel without dread,
 Chanting in barbarous ears a tuneful prayer—
 Sung for themselves, and those whom they would free !
 Rich conquest waits them :—the tempestuous sea
 Of Ignorance, that ran so rough and high
 And heeded not the voice of clashing swords,
 These good men humble by a few bare words,
 And calm with fear of God's divinity.

XV

PAULINUS

BUT, to remote Northumbria's royal Hall,
 Where thoughtful Edwin, tutored in the school
 Of sorrow, still maintains a heathen rule,
Who comes with functions apostolical ?
 Mark him, of shoulders curved, and stature tall,
 Black hair, and vivid eye, and meagre cheek,
 His prominent feature like an eagle's beak ;
 A Man whose aspect doth at once appal
 And strike with reverence. The Monarch leans
 Toward the pure truths this Delegate propounds
 Repeatedly his own deep mind he sounds
 With careful hesitation,—then convenes
 A synod of his Councillors :—give ear,
 And what a pensive Sage doth utter, hear !

XVI

PERSUASION

"MAN'S life is like a Sparrow, mighty King !
 That—while at banquet with your Chiefs you sit
 Housed near a blazing fire—is seen to flit
 Safe from the wintry tempest. Fluttering,
 Here did it enter ; there, on hasty wing,
 Flies out, and passes on from cold to cold ;
 But whence it came we know not, nor behold
 Whither it goes. Even such, that transient Thing,
 The human Soul ; not utterly unknown
 While in the Body lodged, her warm abode ;
 But from what world She came, what woe or weal
 On her departure waits, no tongue hath shown ;
 This mystery if the Stranger can reveal,
 His be a welcome cordially bestowed !"

XVII

CONVERSION

PROMPT transformation works the novel Lore ;
 The Council closed, the Priest in full career
 Rides forth, an armed man, and hurls a spear
 To desecrate the Fane which heretofore
 He served in folly. Woden falls, and Thor
 Is overturned ; the mace, in battle heaved
 (So might they dream) till victory was achieved,
 Drops, and the God himself is seen no more.
 Temple and Altar sink, to hide their shame
 Amid oblivious weeds. "*O come to me,*
Ye heavy laden !" such the inviting voice
 Heard near fresh streams ; and thousands, who rejoice
 In the new Rite, the pledge of sanctity,
 Shall, by regenerate life, the promise claim.

XVIII

APOLOGY

NOR scorn the aid which Fancy oft doth lend
 The Soul's eternal interests to promote :
 Death, darkness, danger, are our natural lot ;
 And evil Spirits *may* our walk attend
 For aught the wisest know or comprehend ;
 Then be *good* Spirits free to breathe a note
 Of elevation ; let their odours float
 Around these Converts ; and their glories blend,

Ecclesiastical Sonnets

411

The midnight stars outshining, or the blaze
Of the noon-day. Nor doubt that golden cords
Of good works, mingling with the visions, raise
The Soul to purer worlds : and *who* the line
Shall draw, the limits of the power define,
That even imperfect faith to man affords ?

XIX

PRIMITIVE SAXON CLERGY

How beautiful your presence, how benign,
Servants of God ! who not a thought will share
With the vain world ; who, outwardly as bare
As winter trees, yield no fallacious sign
That the firm soul is clothed with fruit divine !
Such Priest, when service worthy of his care
Has called him forth to breathe the common air,
Might seem a saintly Image from its shrine
Descended :—happy are the eyes that meet
The Apparition ; evil thoughts are stayed
At his approach, and low-bowed necks entreat
A benediction from his voice or hand ;
Whence grace, through which the heart can understand,
And vows, that bind the will, in silence made.

XX

OTHER INFLUENCES

AH, when the Body, round which in love we clung,
Is chilled by death, does mutual service fail ?
Is tender pity then of no avail ?
Are intercessions of the fervent tongue
A waste of hope ?—From this sad source have sprung
Rites that console the Spirit, under grief
Which ill can brook more rational relief :
Hence, prayers are shaped amiss, and dirges sung
For Souls whose doom is fixed ! The way is smooth
For Power that travels with the human heart :
Confession ministers the pang to soothe
In him who at the ghost of guilt doth start.
Ye holy Men, so earnest in your care,
Of your own mighty instruments beware !

XXI

SECLUSION

LANCE, shield, and sword relinquished, at his side
A bead-roll, in his hand a clasped book,

Or staff more harmless than a shepherd's crook,
 The war-worn Chieftain quits the world—to hide
 His thin autumnal locks where Monks abide
 In cloistered privacy. But not to dwell
 In soft repose he comes : within his cell,
 Round the decaying trunk of human pride,
 At morn, and eve, and midnight's silent hour,
 Do penitential cogitations cling ;
 Like ivy, round some ancient elm, they twine
 In grisly folds and strictures serpentine ;
 Yet, while they strangle, a fair growth they bring,
 For recompence—their own perennial bower.

XXII

CONTINUED

METHINKS that to some vacant hermitage
My feet would rather turn—to some dry nook
 Scooped out of living rock, and near a brook
 Hurl'd down a mountain-cove from stage to stage,
 Yet tempering, for my sight, its bustling rage
 In the soft heaven of a translucent pool ;
 Thence creeping under sylvan arches cool,
 Fit haunt of shapes whose glorious equipage
 Would elevate my dreams. A beechen bowl,
 A maple dish, my furniture should be ;
 Crisp, yellow leaves my bed ; the hooting owl
 My night-watch : nor should e'er the crested fowl
 From thorp or vill his matins sound for me,
 Tired of the world and all its industry.

XXIII

REPROOF

BUT what if One, through grove or flowery mead,
 Indulging thus at will the creeping feet
 Of a voluptuous indolence, should meet
 Thy hovering Shade, O venerable Bede !
 The saint, the scholar, from a circle freed
 Of toil stupendous, in a hallowed seat
 Of learning, where thou heard'st the billows beat
 On a wild coast, rough monitors to feed
 Perpetual industry. Sublime Recluse !
 The recreant soul, that dares to shun the debt
 Imposed on human kind, must first forget
 Thy diligence, thy unrelaxing use . . .

Of a long life ; and, in the hour of death,
The last dear service of thy passing breath ! -

XXIV

SAXON MONASTERIES, AND LIGHTS AND SHADES OF THE
RELIGION

By such examples moved to unbought pains,
The people work like congregated bees ;
Eager to build the quiet Fortresses
Where Piety, as they believe, obtains
From Heaven a *general* blessing ; timely rains
Or needful sunshine ; prosperous enterprise,
Justice and peace :—bold faith ! yet also rise
The sacred Structures for less doubtful gains.
The Sensual think with reverence of the palms
Which the chaste Votaries seek, beyond the grave
If penance be redeemable, thence alms
Flow to the poor, and freedom to the slave ;
And if full oft the Sanctuary save
Lives black with guilt, ferocity it calms.

XXV

MISSIONS AND TRAVELS

NOT sedentary all : there are who roam
To scatter seeds of life on barbarous shores ;
Or quit with zealous step their knee-worn floors
To seek the general mart of Christendom ;
Whence they, like richly-laden merchants, come
To their belovèd cells :—or shall we say
That, like the Red-cross Knight, they urge their way,
To lead in memorable triumph home
Truth, their immortal Una ? Babylon,
Learnèd and wise, hath perished utterly,
Nor leaves her Speech one word to aid the sigh
That would lament her ;—Memphis, Tyre, are gone
With all their Arts,—but classic lore glides on
By these Religious saved for all posterity.

XXVI

ALFRED

BEHOLD a pupil of the monkish gown,
The pious ALFRED, King to Justice dear !

¹ He expired dictating the last words of a translation of St. John's Gospel.

Lord of the harp and liberating spear ;
 Mirror of Princes ! Indigent Renown
 Might range the starry ether for a crown
 Equal to *his* deserts, who, like the year,
 Pours forth his bounty, like the day doth cheer,
 And awes like night with mercy-tempered frown.
 Ease from this noble miser of his time
 No moment steals ; pain narrows not his cares.
 Though small his kingdom as a spark or gem,
 Of Alfred boasts remote Jerusalem,
 And Christian India, through her wide-spread clime,
 In sacred converse gifts with Alfred shares.

XXVII

HIS DESCENDANTS

WHEN thy great soul was freed from mortal chains,
 Darling of England ! many a bitter shower
 Fell on thy tomb ; but emulative power
 Flowed in thy line through undegenerate veins.
 The Race of Alfred covet glorious pains
 When dangers threaten, dangers ever new !
 Black tempests bursting, blacker still in view !
 But manly sovereignty its hold retains ;
 The root sincere, the branches bold to strive
 With the fierce tempest, while, within the round
 Of their protection, gentle virtues thrive ;
 As oft, 'mid some green plot of open ground,
 Wide as the oak extends its dewy gloom,
 The fostered hyacinths spread their purple bloom.

XXVIII

INFLUENCE ABUSED

URGED by Ambition, who with subtlest skill
 Changes her means, the Enthusiast as a dupe
 Shall soar, and as a hypocrite can stoop,
 And turn the instruments of good to ill,
 Moulding the credulous people to his will.
 Such DUNSTAN :—from its Benedictine coop
 Issues the master Mind, at whose fell swoop
 The chaste affections tremble to fulfil
 Their purposes. Behold, pre-signified,
 The Might of spiritual sway ! his thoughts, his dreams
 Do in the supernatural world abide :
 So vaunt a throng of Followers, filled with pride
 In what they see of virtues pushed to extremes,
 And sorceries of talent misapplied.

XXIX

DANISH CONQUESTS

Woe to the Crown that doth the Cowl obey !
Dissension, checking arms that would restrain
The incessant Rovers of the northern main,
Helps to restore and spread a Pagan sway :
But Gospel-truth is potent to allay
Fierceness and rage ; and soon the cruel Dane
Feels, through the influence of her gentle reign,
His native superstitions melt away.
Thus, often, when thick gloom the east o'ershrouds,
The full-orbed Moon, slow-climbing, doth appear
Silently to consume the heavy clouds ;
How no one can resolve ; but every eye
Around her sees, while air is hushed, a clear
And widening circuit of ethereal sky.

XXX

CANUTE

A PLEASANT music floats along the Mere,
From Monks in Ely chanting service high,
While-as Canute the King is rowing by ;
“ My Oarsmen,” quoth the mighty King, “ draw near,
That we the sweet song of the Monks may hear ! ”
He listens (all past conquests, and all schemes
Of future, vanishing like empty dreams)
Heart-touched, and haply not without a tear.
The Royal Minstrel, ere the choir is still,
While his free Barge skims the smooth flood along,
Gives to that rapture an accordant Rhyme.
O suffering Earth ! be thankful : sternest clime
And rudest age are subject to the thrill
Of heaven-descended Piety and Song.

XXXI

THE NORMAN CONQUEST

THE woman-hearted Confessor prepares
The evanescence of the Saxon line.
Hark ! 'tis the tolling Curfew !—the stars shine ;
But of the lights that cherish household cares
And festive gladness, burns not one that dares
To twinkle after that dull stroke of thine,
Emblem and instrument, from Thames to Tyne,
Of force that daunts, and cunning that ensnares !

Yet as the terrors of the lordly bell,
That quench, from hut to palace, lamps and fires,
Touch not the tapers of the sacred quires ;
Even so a thralldom, studious to expel
Old laws, and ancient customs to derange,
To Creed or Ritual brings no fatal change.

XXXII

COLDLY we spake. The Saxons, overpowered
By wrong triumphant through its own excess,
From fields laid waste, from house and home devoured
By flames, look up to heaven and crave redress
From God's eternal justice. Pitiless
Though men be, there are angels that can feel
For wounds that death alone has power to heal,
For penitent guilt, and innocent distress.
And has a Champion risen in arms to try
His Country's virtue, fought, and breathes no more ;
Him in their hearts the people canonize ;
And far above the mine's most precious ore
The least small pittance of bare mould they prize
Scooped from the sacred earth where his dear relics lie.

XXXIII

THE COUNCIL OF CLERMONT

"AND shall," the Pontiff asks, "profaneness flow
From Nazareth—source of Christian piety,
From Bethlehem, from the Mounts of Agony
And glorified Ascension? Warriors, go,
With prayers and blessings we your path will sow ;
Like Moses hold our hands erect, till ye
Have chased far off thy righteous victory
These sons of Amalek, or laid them low !"—
"GOD WILLETH IT," the whole assembly cry ;
Shout which the enraptured multitude astounds !
The Council-roof and Clermont's towers reply ;—
"God willeth it," from hill to hill rebounds,
And, in awe-stricken Countries far and nigh,
Through "Nature's hollow arch" that voice resounds.¹

XXXIV

CRUSADES

THE turbaned Race are poured in thickening swarms
Along the west ; though driven from Aquitaine,

¹ The decision of this council was believed to be instantly known in remote parts of Europe.

The Crescent glitters on the towers of Spain ;
And soft Italia feels renewed alarms ;
The scimitar, that yields not to the charms
Of ease, the narrow Bosphorus will disdain ;
Nor long (that crossed) would Grecian hills detain
Their tents, and check the current of their arms.
Then blame not those who, by the mightiest lever
Known to the moral world, Imagination,
Upheave, so seems it, from her natural station
All Christendom :—they sweep along (was never
So huge a host !)—to tear from the Unbeliever
The precious Tomb, their haven of salvation.

XXXV

RICHARD I

REDOUBTED King, of courage leonine,
I mark thee, Richard ! urgent to equip
Thy warlike person with the staff and scrip ;
I watch thee sailing o'er the midland brine ;
In conquered Cyprus see thy Bride decline
Her blushing cheek, love-vows upon her lip,
And see love-emblems streaming from thy ship,
As thence she holds her way to Palestine.
My Song, a fearless homager, would attend
Thy thundering battle-axe as it cleaves the press
Of war, but duty summons her away
To tell—how, finding in the rash distress
Of those Enthusiasts a subservient friend,
To giddier heights hath clomb the Papal sway.

XXXVI

AN INTERDICT

REALMS quake by turns : proud Arbitress of grace,
The Church, by mandate shadowing forth the power
She arrogates o'er heaven's eternal door,
Closes the gates of every sacred place.
Straight from the sun and tainted air's embrace
All sacred things are covered : cheerful morn
Grows sad as night—no seemly garb is worn,
Nor is a face allowed to meet a face
With natural smiles of greeting. Bells are dumb ;
Ditches are graves—funereal rites denied ;
And in the churchyard he must take his bride
Who dares be wedded ! Fancies thickly come
Into the pensive heart ill fortified,
And comfortless despairs the soul benumb.

XXXVII

PAPAL ABUSES

As with the Stream our voyage we pursue,
 The gross materials of this world present
 A marvellous study of wild accident ;
 Uncouth proximities of old and new ;
 And bold transfigurations, more untrue
 (As might be deemed) to disciplined intent
 Than aught the sky's fantastic element,
 When most fantastic, offers to the view.
 Saw we not Henry scourged at Becket's shrine ?
 Lo ! John self-stripped of his insignia :—crown,
 Sceptre and mantle, sword and ring, laid down
 At a proud Legate's feet ! The spears that line
 Baronial halls, the opprobrious insult feel ;
 And angry Ocean roars a vain appeal.

XXXVIII

SCENE IN VENICE

BLACK Demons hovering o'er his mitred head,
 To Cæsar's Successor the Pontiff spake ;
 " Ere I absolve thee, stoop ! that on thy neck
 Levelled with earth this foot of mine may tread."
 Then he, who to the altar had been led,
 He, whose strong arm the Orient could not check,
 He, who had held the Soldan at his beck,
 Stooped, of all glory disinherited,
 And even the common dignity of man !—
 Amazement strikes the crowd : while many turn
 Their eyes away in sorrow, others burn
 With scorn, invoking a vindictive ban
 From outraged Nature ; but the sense of most
 In abject sympathy with power is lost.

XXXIX

PAPAL DOMINION

UNLESS to Peter's Chair the viewless wind
 Must come and ask permission when to blow,
 What further empire would it have ? for now
 A ghostly Domination, unconfined
 As that by dreaming Bards to Love assigned,
 Sits there in sober truth—to raise the low,
 Perplex the wise, the strong to overthrow ;
 Through earth and heaven to bind and to unbind !—
 Resist—the thunder quails thee !—crouch—rebuff

Shall be thy recompence ! from land to land
The ancient thrones of Christendom are stuff
For occupation of a magic wand,
And 'tis the Pope that wields it :—whether rough
Or smooth his front, our world is in his hand !

PART II

TO THE CLOSE OF THE TROUBLES IN THE REIGN OF
CHARLES I

I

How soon—alas ! did Man, created pure—
By Angels guarded, deviate from the line
Prescribed to duty :—woeful forfeiture
He made by wilful breach of law divine.
With like perverseness did the Church abjure
Obedience to her Lord, and haste to twine,
'Mid Heaven-born flowers that shall for aye endure,
Weeds on whose front the world had fixed her sign.
O Man,—if with thy trials thus it fares,
If good can smooth the way to evil choice,
From all rash censure be the mind kept free ;
He only judges right who weighs, compares,
And in the sternest sentence which his voice
Pronounces, ne'er abandons Charity.

II

From false assumption rose, and, fondly hailed
By superstition, spread the Papal power ;
Yet do not deem the Autocracy prevailed
Thus only, even in error's darkest hour.
She daunts, forth-thundering from her spiritual tower,
Brute rapine, or with gentle lure she tames.
Justice and Peace through Her uphold their claims ;
And Chastity finds many a sheltering bower.
Realm there is none that if controlled or swayed
By her commands partakes not, in degree,
Of good, o'er manners, arts and arms, diffused :
Yes, to thy domination, Roman See,
Tho' miserably, oft monstrously, abused
By blind ambition, be this tribute paid.

III

CISTERTIAN MONASTERY

*" HERE Man more purely lives, less oft doth fall,
More promptly rises, walks with stricter heed,*

*More safely rests, dies happier, is freed
 Earlier from cleansing fires, and gains withal
 A brighter crown.*"—On yon Cistercian wall
 That confident assurance may be read ;
 And, to like shelter, from the world have fled
 Increasing multitudes The potent call
 Doubtless shall cheat full oft the heart's desires ;
 Yet, while the rugged Age on pliant knee
 Vows to rapt Fancy humble fealty,
 A gentler life spreads round the holy spires ;
 Where'er they rise, the sylvan waste retires,
 And aery harvests crown the fertile lea.

IV

DEPLORABLE his lot who tills the ground,
 His whole life long tills it, with heartless toil
 Of villain-service, passing with the soil
 To each new Master, like a steer or hound,
 Or like a rooted tree, or stone earth-bound ;
 But mark how gladly, through their own domains,
 The Monks relax or break these iron chains ;
 While Mercy, uttering, through their voice, a sound
 Echoed in Heaven, cries out, " Ye Chiefs, abate
 These legalized oppressions ! Man—whose name
 And nature God disdained not ; Man—whose soul
 Christ died for—cannot forfeit his high claim
 To live and move exempt from all control
 Which fellow-feeling doth not mitigate ! "

MONKS AND SCHOOLMEN

RECORD we too, with just and faithful pen,
 That many hooded Cenobites there are,
 Who in their private cells have yet a care
 Of public quiet ; unambitious Men,
 Counsellors for the world, of piercing ken ;
 Whose fervent exhortations from afar
 Move Princes to their duty, peace or war ;
 And oft-times in the most forbidding den
 Of solitude, with love of science strong,
 How patiently the yoke of thought they bear,
 How subtly glide its finest threads along !
 Spirits that crowd the intellectual sphere
 With mazy boundaries, as the astronomer
 With orb and cycle girds the starry throng.

VI

OTHER BENEFITS

AND, not in vain embodied to the sight,
Religion finds even in the stern retreat
Of feudal sway her own appropriate seat ;
From the collegiate poms on Windsor's height
Down to the humbler altar, which the Knight
And his retainers of the embattled hall
Seek in domestic oratory small,
For prayer in stillness, or the chanted rite ;
Then chiefly dear, when foes are planted round,
Who teach the intrepid guardians of the place—
Hourly exposed to death, with famine worn,
And suffering under many a perilous wound—
How sad would be their durance, if forlorn
Of offices dispensing heavenly grace !

VII

CONTINUED

AND what melodious sounds at times prevail !
And, ever and anon, how bright a gleam
Pours on the surface of the turbid Stream !
What heartfelt fragrance mingles with the gale
That swells the bosom of our passing sail !
For where, but on *this* River's margin, blow
Those flowers of chivalry, to bind the brow
Of hardihood with wreaths that shall not fail ?—
Fair Court of Edward ! wonder of the world !
I see a matchless blazonry unfurled
Of wisdom, magnanimity, and love ;
And meekness tempering honourable pride ;
The lamb is couching by the lion's side,
And near the flame-eyed eagle sits the dove.

VIII

CRUSADERS

FURL we the sails, and pass with tardy oars
Through these bright regions, casting many a glance
Upon the dream-like issues—the romance
Of many-coloured life that Fortune pours
Round the Crusaders, till on distant shores
Their labours end ; or they return to lie,
The vow performed, in cross-legged effigy,
Devoutly stretched upon their chancel floors.

Am I deceived ? Or is their requiem chanted
 By voices never mute when Heaven unties
 Her inmost, softest, tenderest harmonies ;
 Requiem which Earth takes up with voice undaunted,
 When she would tell how Brave, and Good, and Wise,
 For their high guerdon not in vain have panted !

IX

As faith thus sanctified the warrior's crest
 While from the Papal Unity there came,
 What feeblar means had failed to give, one aim
 Diffused thro' all the regions of the West ;
 So does her Unity its power attest
 By works of Art, that shed, on the outward frame
 Of worship, glory and grace, which who shall blame
 That ever looked to heaven for final rest ?
 Hail countless Temples ! that so well befit
 Your ministry ; that, as ye rise and take
 Form spirit and character from holy writ,
 Give to devotion, wheresoe'er awake,
 Pinions of high and higher sweep, and make
 The unconverted soul with awe submit.

X

WHERE long and deeply hath been fixed the root
 In the blest soil of gospel truth, the Tree,
 (Blighted or scathed tho' many branches be,
 Put forth to wither, many a hopeful shoot)
 Can never cease to bear celestial fruit.
 Witness the Church that oft-times, with effect
 Dear to the saints, strives earnestly to eject
 Her bane, her vital energies recruit.
 Lamenting, do not hopelessly repine,
 When such good work is doomed to be undone,
 The conquests lost that were so hardly won :—
 All promises vouchsafed by Heaven will shine
 In light confirmed while years their course shall run,
 Confirmed alike in progress and decline.

XI

TRANSUBSTANTIATION

ENOUGH ! for see, with dim association
 The tapers burn ; the odorous incense feeds
 A greedy flame ; the pompous mass proceeds ;
 The Priest bestows the appointed consecration ;

And, while the Host is raised, its elevation
An awe and supernatural horror breeds ;
And all the people bow their heads, like reeds
To a soft breeze, in lowly adoration.
This Valdo brooks not. On the banks of Rhone
He taught, till persecution chased him thence,
To adore the Invisible, and Him alone.
Nor are his Followers loth to seek defence,
'Mid woods and wilds, on Nature's craggy throne,
From rites that trample upon soul and sense.

XII

THE VAUDOIS

BUT whence came they who for the Saviour Lord
Have long borne witness as the Scriptures teach ?—
Ages ere Valdo raised his voice to preach
In Gallic ears the unadulterate Word,
Their fugitive Progenitors explored
Subalpine vales, in quest of safe retreats
Where that pure Church survives, though summer heats
Open a passage to the Romish sword,
Far as it dares to follow. Herbs self-sown,
And fruitage gathered from the chestnut wood,
Nourish the sufferers then ; and mists, that brood
O'er chasms with new-fallen obstacles bestrown,
Protect them ; and the eternal snow that daunts
Aliens, is God's good winter for their haunts.

XIII

PRAISED be the Rivers, from their mountain springs
Shouting to Freedom, " Plant thy banners here !"
To harassed Piety, " Dismiss thy fear,
And in our caverns smooth thy ruffled wings !"
Nor be unthanked their final lingerings—
Silent, but not to high-souled Passion's ear—
'Mid reedy fens wide-spread and marshes drear,
Their own creation. Such glad welcomings
As Po was heard to give where Venice rose
Hailed from aloft those Heirs of truth divine
Who near his fountains sought obscure repose,
Yet came prepared as glorious lights to shine,
Should that be needed for their sacred Charge ;
Blest Prisoners They, whose spirits were at large !

XIV

WALDENSES

THOSE had given earliest notice, as the lark
 Springs from the ground the morn to gratulate ;
 Or rather rose the day to antedate,
 By striking out a solitary spark,
 When all the world with midnight gloom was dark.—
 Then followed the Waldensian bands, whom Hate
 In vain endeavours to exterminate,
 Whom Obloquy pursues with hideous bark :
 But they desist not ;—and the sacred fire,
 Rekindled thus, from dens and savage woods
 Moves, handed on with never-ceasing care,
 Through courts, through camps, o'er liminary floods ;
 Nor lacks this sea-girt Isle a timely share
 Of the new Flame, not suffered to expire.

XV

ARCHBISHOP CHICHELY TO HENRY V

“WHAT beast in wilderness or cultured field
 The lively beauty of the leopard shows ?
 What flower in meadow-ground or garden grows
 That to the towering lily doth not yield ?
 Let both meet only on thy royal shield !
 Go forth, great King ! claim what thy birth bestows ;
 Conquer the Gallic lily which thy foes
 Dare to usurp ;—thou hast a sword to wield,
 And Heaven will crown the right.”—The mitred Sire
 Thus spake—and lo ! a Fleet, for Gaul address,
 Ploughs her bold course across the wondering seas ;
 For, sooth to say, ambition, in the breast
 Of youthful heroes, is no sullen fire,
 But one that leaps to meet the fanning breeze.

XVI

WARS OF YORK AND LANCASTER

THUS is the storm abated by the craft
 Of a shrewd Counsellor, eager to protect
 The Church, whose power hath recently been checked,
 Whose monstrous riches threatened. So the shaft
 Of victory mounts high, and blood is quaffed
 In fields that rival Cressy and Poitiers—
 Pride to be washed away by bitter tears !
 For deep as Hell itself, the avenging draught

Of civil slaughter. Yet, while temporal power
Is by these shocks exhausted, spiritual truth
Maintains the else endangered gift of life ;
Proceeds from infancy to lusty youth ;
And, under cover of this woeful strife,
Gathers unblighted strength from hour to hour.

XVII

WICLIFFE

ONCE more the Church is seized with sudden fear,
And at her call is Wicliffe disinhumed :
Yea, his dry bones to ashes are consumed
And flung into the brook that travels near ;
Forthwith, that ancient Voice which Streams can hear
Thus speaks (that Voice which walks upon the wind,
Though seldom heard by busy human kind)—
"As thou these ashes, little Brook ! wilt bear
Into the Avon, Avon to the tide
Of Severn, Severn to the narrow seas,
Into main Ocean they, this deed accurst
An emblem yields to friends and enemies
How the bold Teacher's Doctrine, sanctified
By truth, shall spread, throughout the world dispersed."

XVIII

CORRUPTIONS OF THE HIGHER CLERGY

"WOE to you, Prelates ! rioting in ease
And cumbrous wealth—the shame of your estate ;
You, on whose progress dazzling trains await
Of pompous horses ; whom vain titles please ;
Who will be served by others on their knees,
Yet will yourselves to God no service pay ;
Pastors who neither take nor point the way
To Heaven ; for, either lost in vanities
Ye have no skill to teach, or if ye know
And speak the word——" Alas ! of fearful things
'Tis the most fearful when the people's eye
Abuse hath cleared from vain imaginings ;
And taught the general voice to prophesy
Of Justice armed, and Pride to be laid low.

XIX

ABUSE OF MONASTIC POWER

AND what is Penance with her knotted thong ;
Mortification with the shirt of hair,

Wan cheek, and knees indurated with prayer,
 Vigils, and fastings rigorous as long ;
 If cloistered Avarice scruple not to wrong
 The pious, humble, useful Secular,
 And rob the people of his daily care,
 Scorning that world whose blindness makes her strong;
 Inversion strange ! that, unto One who lives
 For self, and struggles with himself alone,
 The amplest share of heavenly favour gives ;
 That to a Monk allots, both in the esteem
 Of God and man, place higher than to him
 Who on the good of others builds his own !

XX

MONASTIC VOLUPTUOUSNESS

YET more,—round many a Convent's blazing fire
 Unhallowed threads of revelry are spun ;
 There Venus sits disguised like a Nun,—
 While Bacchus, clothed in semblance of a Friar,
 Pours out his choicest beverage high and higher
 Sparkling, until it cannot choose but run
 Over the bowl, whose silver lip hath won
 An instant kiss of masterful desire—
 To stay the precious waste. Through every brain
 The domination of the sprightly juice
 Spreads high conceits to madding Fancy dear,
 Till the arched roof, with resolute abuse
 Of its grave echoes, swells a choral strain,
 Whose votive burthen is—"OUR KINGDOM'S HERE!"

XXI

DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES

THREATS come which no submission may assuage,
 No sacrifice avert, no power dispute ;
 The tapers shall be quenched, the belfries mute,
 And, 'mid their choirs unroofed by selfish rage,
 The warbling wren shall find a leafy cage ;
 The gadding bramble hang her purple fruit ;
 And the green lizard and the gilded newt
 Lead unmolested lives, and die of age.
 The owl of evening and the woodland fox
 For their abode the shrines of Waltham choose :
 Proud Glastonbury can no more refuse
 To stoop her head before these desperate shocks—
 She whose high pomp displaced, as story tells,
 Arimathean Joseph's wattled cells.

XXII

THE SAME SUBJECT

THE lovely Nun (submissive, but more meek
Through saintly habit than from effort due
To unrelenting mandates that pursue
With equal wrath the steps of strong and weak)
Goes forth—unveiling timidly a cheek
Suffused with blushes of celestial hue,
While through the Convent's gate to open view
Softly she glides, another home to seek.
Not Iris, issuing from her cloudy shrine,
An Apparition more divinely bright !
Not more attractive to the dazzled sight
Those watery glories, on the stormy brine
Poured forth, while summer suns at distance shine,
And the green vales lie hushed in sober light !

XXIII

CONTINUED

YET many a Novice of the cloistral shade,
And many chained by vows, with eager glee
The warrant hail, exulting to be free ;
Like ships before whose keels, full long embayed
In polar ice, propitious winds have made
Unlooked-for outlet to an open sea,
Their liquid world, for bold discovery,
In all her quarters temptingly displayed !
Hope guides the young ; but when the old must pass
The threshold, whither shall they turn to find
The hospitality—the alms (alas !
Alms may be needed) which that House bestowed ?
Can they, in faith and worship, train the mind
To keep this new and questionable road ?

XXIV

SAINTS

YE, too, must fly before a chasing hand,
Angels and Saints, in every hamlet mourned !
Ah ! if the old idolatry be spurned,
Let not your radiant Shapes desert the Land :
Her adoration was not your demand,
The fond heart proffered it—the servile heart ;
And therefore are ye summoned to depart,
Michael, and thou, St. George, whose flaming brand

The Dragon quelled ; and valiant Margaret
 Whose rival sword a like Opponent slew :
 And rapt Cecilia seraph-haunted Queen
 Of harmony ; and weeping Magdalene,
 Who in the penitential desert met
 Gales sweet as those that over Eden blew !

XXV

THE VIRGIN

MOTHER ! whose virgin bosom was uncrosth
 With the least shade of thought to sin allied ;
 Woman ! above all women glorified,
 Our tainted nature's solitary boast ;
 Purer than foam on central ocean tost ;
 Brighter than eastern skies at daybreak strewn
 With fancied roses, than the unblemished moon
 Before her wane begins on heaven's blue coast ;
 Thy Image falls to earth. Yet some, I ween,
 Not unforgiven the suppliant knee might bend,
 As to a visible Power, in which did blend
 All that was mixed and reconciled in Thee
 Of mother's love with maiden purity,
 Of high with low, celestial with terrene !

XXVI

APOLOGY

NOT utterly unworthy to endure
 Was the supremacy of crafty Rome ;
 Age after age to the arch of Christendom
 Aërial keystone haughtily secure ;
 Supremacy from Heaven transmitted pure,
 As many hold ; and, therefore, to the tomb
 Pass, some through fire—and by the scaffold some—
 Like saintly Fisher, and unbending More.
 “Lightly for both the bosom's lord did sit
 Upon his throne ;” unsoftened, undismayed
 By aught that mingled with the tragic scene
 Of pity or fear : and More's gay genius played
 With the inoffensive sword of native wit,
 Than the bare axe more luminous and keen.

XXVII

IMAGINATIVE REGRETS

DEEP is the lamentation ! Not alone
 From Sages justly honoured by mankind ;

But from the ghostly tenants of the wind,
 Demons and Spirits, many a dolorous groan
 Issues for that dominion overthrown :
 Proud Tiber grieves, and far-off Ganges, blind
 As his own worshippers : and Nile, reclined
 Upon his monstrous urn, the farewell moan
 Renews. Through every forest, cave, and den,
 Where frauds were hatched of old, hath sorrow past-
 Hangs o'er the Arabian Prophet's native Waste,
 Where once his airy helpers schemed and planned
 'Mid spectral lakes bemocking thirsty men,
 And stalking pillars built of fiery sand.

XXVIII

REFLECTIONS

GRANT, that by this unsparing hurricane
 Green leaves with yellow mixed are torn away,
 And goodly fruitage with the mother spray ;
 'Twere madness—wished we, therefore, to detain,
 With hands stretched forth in mollified disdain,
 The “trumpety” that ascends in bare display—
 Bulls, pardons, relics, cowls black, white, and grey—
 Upwhirled, and flying o'er the ethereal plain
 Fast bound for Limbo Lake. And yet not choice
 But habit rules the unreflecting herd,
 And airy bonds are hardest to disown ;
 Hence, with the spiritual sovereignty transferred
 Unto itself, the Crown assumes a voice
 Of reckless mastery, hitherto unknown.

XXIX

TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

BUT, to outweigh all harm, the sacred Book,
 In dusty sequestration wrapt too long,
 Assumes the accents of our native tongue ;
 And he who guides the plough, or wields the crook,
 With understanding spirit now may look
 Upon her records, listen to her song,
 And sift her laws—much wondering that the wrong,
 Which Faith has suffered, Heaven could calmly brook.
 Transcendent boon ! noblest that earthly King
 Ever bestowed to equalize and bless
 Under the weight of mortal wretchedness !
 But passions spread like plagues, and thousands wild
 With bigotry shall tread the Offering
 Beneath their feet, detested and defiled.

XXX

THE POINT AT ISSUE

FOR what contend the wise?—for nothing less
 Than that the Soul, freed from the bonds of Sense,
 And to her God restored by evidence
 Of things not seen, drawn forth from their recess,
 Root there, and not in forms, her holiness ;—
 For Faith, which to the Patriarchs did dispense
 Sure guidance, ere a ceremonial fence
 Was needful round men thirsting to transgress ;—
 For Faith, more perfect still, with which the Lord
 Of all, himself a Spirit, in the youth
 Of Christian aspiration, deigned to fill
 The temples of their hearts who, with his word
 Informed, were resolute to do his will,
 And worship him in spirit and in truth.

XXXI

EDWARD VI

"SWEET is the holiness of Youth"—so felt
 Time-honoured Chaucer speaking through that Lay
 By which the Prioress beguiled the way,
 And many a Pilgrim's rugged heart did melt.
 Hadst thou, loved Bard ! whose spirit often dwelt
 In the clear land of vision, but foreseen
 King, child, and seraph, blended in the mien
 Of pious Edward kneeling as he knelt
 In meek and simple infancy, what joy
 For universal Christendom had thrilled
 Thy heart ! what hopes inspired thy genius, skilled
 (O great Precursor, genuine morning Star)
 The lucid shafts of reason to employ,
 Piercing the Papal darkness from afar !

XXXII

EDWARD SIGNING THE WARRANT FOR THE
 EXECUTION OF JOAN OF KENT

THE tears of man in various measure gush
 From various sources ; gently overflow
 From blissful transport some—from clefts of woe
 Some with ungovernable impulse rush ;
 And some, coeval with the earliest blush
 Of infant passion, scarcely dare to show
 Their pearly lustre—coming but to go ;
 And some break forth when others' sorrows crush

The sympathising heart. Nor these, nor yet
The noblest drops to admiration known,
To gratitude, to injuries forgiven—
Claim Heaven's regard like waters that have wet
The innocent eyes of youthful Monarchs driven
To pen the mandates, nature doth disown.

XXXIII

REVIVAL OF POPERY

THE saintly Youth has ceased to rule, disowned
By unrelenting Death. O People keen
For change, to whom the new looks always green !
Rejoicing did they cast upon the ground
Their Gods of wood and stone ; and, at the sound
Of counter-proclamation, now are seen,
(Proud triumph is it for a sullen Queen !)
Lifting them up, the worship to confound
Of the Most High. Again do they invoke
The Creature, to the Creature glory give ;
Again with frankincense the altars smoke
Like those the Heathen served ; and mass is sung ;
And prayer, man's rational prerogative,
Runs through blind channels of an unknown tongue.

XXXIV

LATIMER AND RIDLEY

How fast the Marian death-list is unrolled !
See Latimer and Ridley in the might
Of Faith stand coupled for a common flight !
One (like those prophets whom God sent of old)
Transfigured, from this kindling hath foretold
A torch of inextinguishable light ;
The Other gains a confidence as bold ;
And thus they foil their enemy's despise.
The penal instruments, the shows of crime,
Are glorified while this once-mitred pair
Of saintly Friends the "murtherer's chain partake,
Corded, and burning at the social stake :"
Earth never witnessed object more sublime
In constancy, in fellowship more fair !

XXXV

CRANMER

OUTSTRETCHING flameward his upbraided hand
(O God of mercy, may no earthly Seat

Of judgment such presumptuous doom repeat !)
 Amid the shuddering throng doth Cranmer stand ;
 Firm as the stake to which with iron band
 His frame is tied ; firm from the naked feet
 To the bare head. The victory is complete ;
 The shrouded Body to the Soul's command
 Answers with more than Indian fortitude,
 Through all her nerves with finer sense endued,
 Till breath departs in blissful aspiration :
 Then, 'mid the ghastly ruins of the fire,
 Behold the unalterable heart entire,
 Emblem of faith untouched, miraculous attestation !

XXXVI

GENERAL VIEW OF THE TROUBLES OF THE REFORMATION

Aid, glorious Martyrs, from your fields of light,
 Our mortal ken ! Inspire a perfect trust
 (While we look round) that Heaven's decrees are just :
 Which few can hold committed to a fight
 That shows, ev'n on its better side, the might
 Of proud Self-will, Rapacity, and Lust,
 'Mid clouds enveloped of polemic dust,
 Which showers of blood seem rather to incite
 Than to allay. Anathemas are hurled
 From both sides ; veteran thunders (the brute test
 Of truth) are met by fulminations new—
 Tartarean flags are caught at, and unfurled—
 Friends strike at friends—the flying shall pursue—
 And Victory sickens, ignorant where to rest !

XXXVII

ENGLISH REFORMERS IN EXILE

SCATTERING, like birds escaped the fowler's net,
 Some seek with timely flight a foreign strand ;
 Most happy, re-assembled in a land
 By dauntless Luther freed, could they forget
 Their Country's woes. But scarcely have they met,
 Partners in faith, and brothers in distress,
 Free to pour forth their common thankfulness,
 Ere hope declines :—their union is beset
 With speculative notions rashly sown,
 Whence thickly-sprouting growth of poisonous weeds ;
 Their forms are broken staves ; their passions, steeds
 That master them. How enviably blest

Is he who can, by help of grace, enthrone
The peace of God within his single breast !

XXXVIII

ELIZABETH

HAIL, Virgin Queen ! o'er many an envious bar
Triumphant, snatched from many a treacherous wile !
All hail, sage Lady, whom a grateful Isle
Hath blest, respiring from that dismal war
Stilled by thy voice ! But quickly from afar
Defiance breathes with more malignant aim ;
And alien storms with home-bred ferments claim
Portentous fellowship. Her silver car,
By sleepless prudence ruled, glides slowly on ;
Unhurt by violence, from menaced taint
Emerging pure, and seemingly more bright :
Ah ! wherefore yields it to a foul constraint
Black as the clouds its beams dispersed, while shone,
By men and angels blest, the glorious light ?

XXXIX

EMINENT REFORMERS

METHINKS that I could trip o'er heaviest soil,
Light as a buoyant bark from wave to wave,
Werc mine the trusty staff that JEWEL gave
To youthful HOOKER, in familiar style
The gift exalting, and with playful smile :
For thus equipped, and bearing on his head
The Donor's farewell blessing, can he dread
Tempest, or length of way, or weight of toil ?—
More sweet than odours caught by him who sails
Near spicy shores of Araby the blest,
A thousand times more exquisitely sweet,
The freight of holy feeling which we meet,
In thoughtful moments, wafted by the gales
From fields where good men walk, or bowers wherein
they rest.

XL

THE SAME

HOLY and heavenly Spirits as they are,
Spotless in life, and eloquent as wise,
With what entire affection do they prize
Their Church reformed ! labouring with earnest care

To baffle all that may her strength impair ;
 That Church, the unperverted Gospel's seat ;
 In their afflictions a divine retreat ;
 Source of their liveliest hope, and tenderest prayer !—
 The truth exploring with an equal mind,
 In doctrine and communion they have sought
 Firmly between the two extremes to steer ;
 But theirs the wise man's ordinary lot—
 To trace right courses for the stubborn blind,
 And prophesy to ears that will not hear.

XLI

DISTRACTIONS

MEN, who have ceased to reverence, soon defy,
 Their forefathers ; lo ! sects are formed, and split
 With morbid restlessness ;—the ecstatic fit
 Spreads wide ; though special mysteries multiply,
The Saints must govern, is their common cry ;
 And so they labour, deeming Holy Writ
 Disgraced by aught that seems content to sit
 Beneath the roof of settled Modesty.
 The Romanist exults ; fresh hope he draws
 From the confusion, craftily incites
 The overweening, personates the mad—
 To heap disgust upon the worthier Cause :
 Totters the Throne ; the new-born Church is sad,
 For every wave against her peace unites.

XLII

GUNPOWDER PLOT

FEAR hath a hundred eyes that all agree
 To plague her beating heart ; and there is one
 (Nor idlest that !) which holds communion
 With things that were not, yet were *meant* to be.
 Aghast within its gloomy cavity
 That eye (which sees as if fulfilled and done
 Crimes that might stop the motion of the sun)
 Beholds the horrible catastrophe
 Of an assembled Senate unredeemed
 From subterraneous Treason's darkling power :
 Merciless act of sorrow infinite !
 Worse than the product of that dismal night,
 When gushing, copious as a thunder-shower,
 The blood of Huguenots through Paris streamed.

XLIII

ILLUSTRATION

THE JUNG-FRAU AND THE FALL OF THE RHINE NEAR
SCHAFFHAUSEN

THE Virgin Mountain,¹ wearing like a Queen
A brilliant crown of everlasting snow,
Sheds ruin from her sides ; and men below
Wonder that aught of aspect so serene
Can link with desolation. Smooth and green,
And seeming, at a little distance, slow,
The waters of the Rhine ; but on they go
Fretting and whitening, keener and more keen ;
Till madness seizes on the whole wide Flood,
Turned to a fearful Thing whose nostrils breathe
Blasts of tempestuous smoke—wherewith he tries
To hide himself, but only magnifies ;
And doth in more conspicuous torment writhe,
Deafening the region in his ireful mood.

XLIV

TROUBLES OF CHARLES THE FIRST

EVEN such the contrast that, where'er we move,
To the mind's eye Religion doth present ;
Now with her own deep quietness content ;
Then, like the mountain, thundering from above
Against the ancient pine-trees of the grove
And the Land's humblest comforts. Now her mood
Recalls the transformation of the flood,
Whose rage the gentle skies in vain reprove ;
Earth cannot check. O terrible excess
Of headstrong will ! Can this be Piety ?
No—some fierce Maniac hath usurped her name ;
And scourges England struggling to be free :
Her peace destroyed ! her hopes a wilderness !
Her blessings cursed—her glory turned to shame !

XLV

LAUD

PREJUDGED by foes determined not to spare,
An old weak Man for vengeance thrown aside.
Laud, "in the painful art of dying" tried,
(Like a poor bird entangled in a snare
Whose heart still flutters, though his wings forbear
To stir in useless struggle) hath relied

¹ The Jung-frau.

On hope that conscious innocence supplied,
 And in his prison breathes celestial air.
 Why tarries then thy chariot? Wherefore stay,
 O Death! the ensanguined yet triumphant wheels,
 Which thou prepar'st, full often, to convey
 (What time a State with madding faction reels)
 The Saint or Patriot to the world that heals
 All wounds, all perturbations doth allay?

XLVI

AFFLICTIONS OF ENGLAND

HARP! could'st thou venture, on thy boldest string,
 The faintest note to echo which the blast
 Caught from the hand of Moses as it passed
 O'er Sinai's top, or from the Shepherd-king,
 Early awake, by Siloa's brook, to sing
 Of dread Jehovah; then, should wood and waste
 Hear also of that name, and mercy cast
 Off to the mountains, like a covering
 Of which the Lord was weary. Weep, oh! weep,
 Weep with the good, beholding King and Priest
 Despised by that stern God to whom they raise
 Their suppliant hands; but holy is the feast
 He keepeth; like the firmament his ways:
 His statutes like the chambers of the deep.

PART III

FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE PRESENT TIMES¹

I

I saw the figure of a lovely Maid
 Seated alone beneath a darksome tree,
 Whose fondly-overhanging canopy
 Set off her brightness with a pleasing shade.
 No Spirit was she; *that* my heart betrayed,
 For she was one I loved exceedingly;
 But while I gazed in tender reverie
 (Or was it sleep that with my Fancy played?)
 The bright corporeal presence—form and face—
 Remaining still distinct grew thin and rare,

¹ When I came to this part of the series I had the dream described in this Sonnet. The figure was that of my daughter, and the whole passed exactly as here represented. The Sonnet was composed on the middle road leading from Grasmere to Ambleside: it was begun as I left the last house of the vale, and finished, word for word as it now stands, before I came in view of Rydal.

Like sunny mist ;—at length the golden hair,
Shape, limbs, and heavenly features, keeping pace
Each with the other in a lingering race
Of dissolution, melted into air.

II

PATRIOTIC SYMPATHIES

LAST night, without a voice, that Vision spake
Fear to my Soul, and sadness which might seem
Wholly dissevered from our present theme ;
Yet, my beloved Country ! I partake
Of kindred agitations for thy sake ;
Thou, too, dost visit oft my midnight dream ;
Thy glory meets me with the earliest beam
Of light, which tells that Morning is awake.
If aught impair thy beauty or destroy,
Or but forebode destruction, I deplore
With filial love the sad vicissitude ;
If thou hast fallen, and righteous Heaven restore
The prostrate, then my spring-time is renewed,
And sorrow bartered for exceeding joy.

III

CHARLES THE SECOND

WHO comes—with rapture greeted, and caressed
With frantic love—his kingdom to regain ?
Him Virtue's Nurse, Adversity, in vain
Received, and fostered in her iron breast :
For all she taught of hardest and of best,
Or would have taught, by discipline of pain
And long privation, now dissolves amain,
Or is remembered only to give zest
To wantonness.—Away, Circean revels !
But for what gain ? if England soon must sink
Into a gulf which all distinction levels—
That bigotry may swallow the good name,
And, with that draught, the life-blood : misery, shame,
By Poets loathed ; from which Historians shrink !

IV

LATITUDINARIANISM

YET Truth is keenly sought for, and the wind
Charged with rich words poured out in thought's defence ;
Whether the Church inspire that eloquence,
Or a Platonic Piety confined

To the sole temple of the inward mind ;
 And One there is who builds immortal lays,
 Though doomed to tread in solitary ways,
 Darkness before and danger's voice behind ;
 Yet not alone, nor helpless to repel
 Sad thoughts ; for from above the starry sphere
 Come secrets, whispered nightly to his ear ;
 And the pure spirit of celestial light
 Shines through his soul—"that he may see and tell
 Of things invisible to mortal sight."

WALTON'S BOOK OF LIVES

THERE are no colours in the fairest sky
 So fair as these. The feather, whence the pen
 Was shaped that traced the lives of these good men,
 Dropped from an Angel's wing. With moistened eye
 We read of faith and purest charity
 In Statesman, Priest, and humble Citizen :
 Oh could we copy their mild virtues, then
 What joy to live, what blessedness to die !
 Methinks their very names shine still and bright ;
 Apart—like glow-worms on a summer night ;
 Or lonely tapers when from far they fling
 A guiding ray ; or seen—like stars on high,
 Satellites burning in a lucid ring
 Around meek Walton's heavenly memory.

VI

CLERICAL INTEGRITY

NOR shall the eternal roll of praise reject
 Those Unconforming ; whom one rigorous day
 Drives from their Cures, a voluntary prey
 To poverty, and grief, and disrespect.
 And some to want—as if by tempests wrecked
 On a wild coast ; how destitute ! did They
 Feel not that Conscience never can betray,
 That peace of mind is Virtue's sure effect.
 Their altars they forego, their homes they quit,
 Fields which they love, and paths they daily trod,
 And cast the future upon Providence ;
 As men the dictate of whose inward sense
 Outweighs the world ; whom self-deceiving wit
 Lures not from what they deem the cause of God.

VII

PERSECUTION OF THE SCOTTISH COVENANTERS

WHEN Alpine Vales threw forth a suppliant cry,
The Majesty of England interposed
And the sword stopped ; the bleeding wounds were closed ;
And Faith preserved her ancient purity.
How little boots that precedent of good,
Scorned or forgotten, Thou canst testify,
For England's shame, O Sister Realm ! from wood,
Mountain, and moor, and crowded street, where lie
The headless martyrs of the Covenant,
Slain by Compatriot-protestants that draw
From councils senseless as intolerant
Their warrant. Bodies fall by wild sword-law ;
But who would force the Soul, tilts with a straw
Against a Champion cased in adamant.

VIII

ACQUITTAL OF THE BISHOPS

A VOICE, from long-expecting thousands sent,
Shatters the air, and troubles tower and spire ;
For Justice hath absolved the innocent,
And Tyranny is balked of her desire :
Up, down, the busy Thames—rapid as fire
Coursing a train of gunpowder—it went,
And transport finds in every street a vent,
Till the whole City rings like one vast quire.
The Fathers urge the People to be still,
With outstretched hands and earnest speech—in vain !
Yea, many, haply wont to entertain
Small reverence for the mitre's offices,
And to Religion's self no friendly will,
A Prelate's blessing ask on bended knees.

IX

WILLIAM THE THIRD

CALM as an under-current, strong to draw
Millions of waves into itself, and run,
From sea to sea, impervious to the sun
And ploughing storm, the spirit of Nassau
Swerves not, (how blest if by religious awe
Swayed, and thereby enabled to contend
With the wide world's commotions) from its end
Swerves not—diverted by a casual law.

Had mortal action e're a nobler scope?
 The Hero comes to liberate, not defy;
 And, while he marches on with stedfast hope,
 Conqueror beloved! expected anxiously!
 The vacillating Bondman of the Pope
 Shrinks from the verdict of his stedfast eye.

OBLIGATIONS OF CIVIL TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

UNGRATEFUL Country, if thou e'er forget
 The sons who for thy civil rights have bled!
 How, like a Roman, Sidney bowed his head,
 And Russel's milder blood the scaffold wet;
 But these had fallen for profitless regret
 Had not thy holy Church her champions bred
 And claims from other worlds inspirited
 The star of Liberty to rise. Nor yet
 (Grave this within thy heart!) if spiritual things
 Be lost, through apathy, or scorn, or fear,
 Shalt thou thy humbler franchises support,
 However hardly won or justly dear:
 What came from heaven to heaven by nature clings
 And, if dissevered thence, its course is short.

XI

SACHEVEREL

A SUDDEN conflict rises from the swell
 Of a proud slavery met by tenets strained
 In Liberty's behalf. Fears, true or feigned,
 Spread through all ranks; and lo! the Sentinel
 Who loudest rang his pulpit 'larum bell,
 Stands at the Bar, absolved by female eyes
 Mingling their glances with grave flatteries
 Lavished on *Him*—that England may rebel
 Against her ancient virtue. HIGH and LOW,
 Watchwords of Party, on all tongues are rife;
 As if a Church, though sprung from heaven, must owe
 To opposites and fierce extremes her life,—
 Not to the golden mean, and quiet flow
 Of truths that soften hatred, temper strife.

XII

DOWN a swift Stream, thus far, a bold design
 Have we pursued, with livelier stir of heart
 Than his who sees, borne forward by the Rhine,
 The living landscapes greet him, and depart;

Sees spires fast sinking—up again to start !
And strives the towers to number, that recline
O'er the dark steeps, or on the horizon line
Striding with shattered crests his eye athwart,
So have we hurried on with troubled pleasure :
Henceforth, as on the bosom of a stream
That slackens, and spreads wide a watery gleam,
We, nothing loth a lingering course to measure,
May gather up our thoughts, and mark at leisure
How widely spread the interests of our theme.

XIII

ASPECTS OF CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA

I. THE PILGRIM FATHERS¹

WELL worthy to be magnified are they
Who, with sad hearts, of friends and country took
A last farewell, their loved abodes forsook,
And hallowed ground in which their fathers lay ;
Then to the new-found World explored their way,
That so a Church, unforced, uncalled to brook
Ritual restraints, within some sheltering nook
Her Lord might worship and his word obey
In freedom. Men they were who could not bend ;
Blest Pilgrims, surely, as they took for guide
A will by sovereign Conscience sanctified ;
Blest while their Spirits from the woods ascend
Along a Galaxy that knows no end,
But in His glory who for Sinners died.

XIV

II. CONTINUED

FROM Rite and Ordinance abused they fled
To Wilds where both were utterly unknown ;
But not to them had Providence foreshown
What benefits are missed, what evils bred,
In worship neither raised nor limited
Save by Self-will. Lo ! from that distant shore,
For Rite and Ordinance, Piety is led
Back to the Land those Pilgrims left of yore,
Led by her own free choice. So Truth and Love
By Conscience governed do their steps retrace.—
Fathers ! your Virtues, such the power of grace,
Their spirit, in your Children, thus approve.

¹ This and the two following were added in 1842.

Transcendent over time, unbound by place,
Concord and Charity in circles move.

XV

III. CONCLUDED.—AMERICAN EPISCOPACY

PATRIOTS informed with Apostolic light
Were they, who, when their Country had been freed,
Bowing with reverence to the ancient creed,
Fixed on the frame of England's Church their sight,
And strove in filial love to reunite
What force had severed. Thence they fetched the seed
Of Christian unity, and won a meed
Of praise from Heaven. To Thee, O saintly WHITE,
Patriarch of a wide-spreading family,
Remotest lands and unborn times shall turn,
Whether they would restore or build—to Thee,
As one who rightly taught how zeal should burn,
As one who drew from out Faith's holiest urn
The purest stream of patient Energy.

XVI

BISHOPS and Priests, blessèd are ye, if deep
(As yours above all offices is high)
Deep in your hearts the sense of duty lie ;
Charged as ye are by Christ to feed and keep
From wolves your portion of his chosen sheep :
Labouring as ever in your Master's sight,
Making your hardest task your best delight,
What perfect glory ye in Heaven shall reap !—
But, in the solemn Office which ye sought
And undertook premonished, if unsound
Your practice prove, faithless though but in thought,
Bishops and Priests, think what a gulf profound
Awaits you then, if they were rightly taught
Who framed the Ordinance by your lives disowned !

XVII

PLACES OF WORSHIP

As star that shines dependent upon star
Is to the sky while we look up and love ;
As to the deep fair ships which though they move
Seem fixed, to eyes that watch them from afar ;
As to the sandy desert fountains are,
With palm-groves shaded at wide intervals,
Whose fruit around the sun-burnt Native falls

Of roving tired or desultory war—
Such to this British Isle her christian Fanes,
Each linked to each for kindred services ;
Her Spires, her Steeple-towers with glittering vanes
Far-kenned, her Chapels lurking among trees,
Where a few villagers on bended knees
Find solace which a busy world disdains.

XVIII

PASTORAL CHARACTER

A GENIAL hearth, a hospitable board,
And a refined rusticity, belong
To the neat mansion, where, his flock among,
The learned Pastor dwells, their watchful Lord.
Though meek and patient as a sheathed sword ;
Though pride's least lurking thought appear a wrong
To human kind ; though peace be on his tongue,
Gentleness in his heart—can earth afford
Such genuine state, pre-eminence so free,
As when, arrayed in Christ's authority,
He from the pulpit lifts his awful hand ;
Conjures, implores, and labours all he can
For re-subjecting to divine command
The stubborn spirit of rebellious man ?

XIX

THE LITURGY

YES, if the intensities of hope and fear
Attract us still, and passionate exercise
Of lofty thoughts, the way before us lies
Distinct with signs, through which in set career.
As through a zodiac, moves the ritual year
Of England's Church ; stupendous mysteries !
Which whoso travels in her bosom eyes,
As he approaches them, with solemn cheer.
Upon that circle traced from sacred story
We only dare to cast a transient glance,
Trusting in hope that Others may advance
With mind intent upon the King of Glory,
From his mild advent till his countenance
Shall dissipate the seas and mountains hoary.

XX

BAPTISM

DEAR be the Church, that, watching o'er the needs
Of Infancy, provides a timely shower

Whose virtue changes to a christian Flower
 A Growth from sinful Nature's bed of weeds !—
 Fitliest beneath the sacred roof proceeds
 The ministration ; while parental Love
 Looks on, and Grace descendeth from above
 As the high service pledges now, now pleads.
 There, should vain thoughts outspread their wings and
 To meet the coming hours of festal mirth,
 The tombs—which hear and answer that brief cry,
 The Infant's notice of his second birth—
 Recall the wandering Soul to sympathy
 With what man hopes from Heaven, yet fears from Earth.

XXI

SPONSORS

FATHER !—to God himself we cannot give
 A holier name ! then lightly do not bear
 Both names conjoined, but of thy spiritual care
 Be duly mindful : still more sensitive
 Do Thou, in truth a second Mother, strive
 Against disheartening custom, that by Thee
 Watched, and with love and pious industry
 Tended at need, the adopted Plant may thrive
 For everlasting bloom. Benign and pure
 This Ordinance, whether, loss it would supply,
 Prevent omission, help deficiency,
 Or seek to make assurance doubly sure.
 Shame if the consecrated Vow be found
 An idle form, the Word an empty sound !

XXII

CATECHISING

FROM Little down to Least, in due degree,
 Around the Pastor, each in new-wrought vest.
 Each with a vernal posy at his breast,
 We stood, a trembling, earnest Company !
 With low soft murmur, like a distant bee,
 Some spake, by thought-perplexing fears betrayed ;
 And some a bold unerring answer made :
 How fluttered then thy anxious heart for me,
 Belovèd Mother ! Thou whose happy hand
 Had bound the flowers I wore, with faithful tie :
 Sweet flowers ! at whose inaudible command
 Her countenance, phantom-like, doth re-appear :

O lost too early for the frequent tear,
And ill requited by this heartfelt sigh !

XXIII

CONFIRMATION

THE Young-ones gathered in from hill and dale,
With holiday delight on every brow :
'Tis passed away ; far other thoughts prevail ;
For they are taking the baptismal Vow
Upon their conscious selves ; their own lips speak
The solemn promise. Strongest sinews fail,
And many a blooming, many a lovely, cheek
Under the holy fear of God turns pale ;
While on each head his lawn-robed Servant lays
An apostolic hand, and with prayer seals
The Covenant. The Omnipotent will raise
Their feeble Souls ; and bear with *his* regrets,
Who, looking round the fair assemblage, feels
That ere the Sun goes down their childhood sets.

XXIV

CONFIRMATION CONTINUED

I SAW a Mother's eye intensely bent
Upon a Maiden trembling as she knelt ;
In and for whom the pious Mother felt
Things that we judge of by a light too faint :
Tell, if ye may, some star-crowned Muse, or Saint !
Tell what rushed in, from what she was relieved—
Then, when her Child the hallowing touch received,
And such vibration through the Mother went
That tears burst forth amain. Did gleams appear ?
Opened a vision of that blissful place
Where dwells a Sister-child ? And was power given
Part of her lost One's glory back to trace
Even to this Rite ? For thus *She* knelt, and, ere
The summer-leaf had faded, passed to Heaven.

XXV

SACRAMENT

By chain yet stronger must the Soul be tied :
One duty more, last stage of this ascent,
Brings to thy food, mysterious Sacrament !
The Offspring, haply, at the Parent's side ;
But not till They, with all that do abide
In Heaven, have lifted up their hearts to laud

And magnify the glorious name of God,
 Fountain of grace, whose Son for sinners died.
 Ye, who have duly weighed the summons, pause
 No longer ; ye, whom to the saving rite
 The Altar calls, come early under laws
 That can secure for you a path of light
 Through gloomiest shade ; put on (nor dread its weight)
 Armour divine, and conquer in your cause !

XXVI

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

THE Vested Priest before the Altar stands ;
 Approach, come gladly, ye prepared, in sight
 Of God and chosen friends, your troth to plight
 With the symbolic ring, and willing hands
 Solemnly joined. Now sanctify the bands
 O Father !—to the Espoused thy blessing give,
 That mutually assisted they may live
 Obedient, as here taught, to thy commands.
 So prays the Church, to consecrate a Vow
 “The which would endless matrimony make ;”
 Union that shadows forth and doth partake
 A mystery potent human love to endow
 With heavenly, each more prized for the other's sake ;
 Weep not, meek Bride ! uplift thy timid brow.

XXVII

THANKSGIVING AFTER CHILDBIRTH

WOMAN ! the Power who left his throne on high,
 And deigned to wear the robe of flesh we wear,
 The Power that thro' the straits of Infancy
 Did pass dependent on maternal care,
 His own humanity with Thee will share,
 Pleased with the thanks that in his People's eye
 Thou offerest up for safe Delivery
 From Childbirth's perilous throes. And should the Heir
 Of thy fond hopes hereafter walk inclined
 To courses fit to make a mother rue
 That ever he was born, a glance of mind
 Cast upon this observance may renew
 A better will ; and, in the imagined view
 Of thee thus kneeling, safety he may find.

XXVIII

VISITATION OF THE SICK

THE Sabbath bells renew the inviting peal ;
Glad music ! yet there be that, worn with pain
And sickness, listen where they long have lain,
In sadness listen. With maternal zeal
Inspired, the Church sends ministers to kneel
Beside the afflicted ; to sustain with prayer,
And soothe the heart confession hath laid bare—
That pardon, from God's throne, may set its seal
On a true Penitent. When breath departs
From one disburthened so, so comforted,
His Spirit Angels greet ; and ours be hope
That, if the Sufferer rise from his sick-bed,
Hence he will gain a firmer mind, to cope
With a bad world, and foil the Tempter's arts.

XXIX

THE COMMINATION SERVICE

SHUN not this Rite, neglected, yea abhorred,
By some of unreflecting mind, as calling
Man to curse man, (thought monstrous and appalling.)
Go thou and hear the threatenings of the LORD ;
Listening within his Temple see his sword
Unsheathed in wrath to strike the offender's head,
Thy own, if sorrow for thy sin be dead,
Guilt unrepented, pardon unimplored.
Two aspects bears Truth needful for salvation ;
Who knows not *that*?—yet would this delicate age
Look only on the Gospel's brighter page :
Let light and dark duly our thoughts employ ;
So shall the fearful words of Commination
Yield timely fruit of peace and love and joy.

XXX

FORMS OF PRAYER AT SEA

To kneeling Worshippers no earthly floor
Gives holier invitation than the deck
Of a storm-shattered Vessel saved from Wreck
(When all that Man could do availed no more)
By him who raised the Tempest and restrains :
Happy the crew who this have felt, and pour
Forth for his mercy, as the Church ordains,
Solemn thanksgiving. Nor will *they* implore

In vain who, for a rightful cause, give breath
 To words the Church prescribes aiding the lip
 For the heart's sake, ere ship with hostile ship
 Encounters, armed for work of pain and death.
 Suppliants ! the God to whom your cause ye trust
 Will listen, and ye know that He is just.

XXXI

FUNERAL SERVICE

FROM the Baptismal hour, thro' weal and woe,
 The Church extends her care to thought and deed ;
 Nor quits the Body when the Soul is freed,
 The mortal weight cast off to be laid low.
 Blest Rite for him who hears in faith, " I know
 That my Redeemer liveth,"—hears each word
 That follows—striking on some kindred chord
 Deep in the thankful heart ;—yet tears will flow.
 Man is as grass that springeth up at morn,
 Grows green, and is cut down and withereth
 Ere nightfall—truth that well may claim a sigh,
 Its natural echo ; but hope comes reborn
 At Jesu's bidding. We rejoice, " O Death,
 Where is thy Sting?—O Grave, where is thy Victory?"

XXXII

RURAL CEREMONY

CLOSING the sacred Book which long has fed
 Our meditations, give we to a day
 Of annual joy one tributary lay ;
 This day, when, forth by rustic music led,
 The village Children, while the sky is red
 With evening lights, advance in long array
 Through the still churchyard, each with garland gay,
 That, carried sceptre-like, o'ertops the head
 Of the proud Bearer. To the wide church-door,
 Charged with these offerings which their fathers bore
 For decoration in the Papal time,
 The innocent procession softly moves :—
 The spirit of Laud is pleased in heaven's pure clime,
 And Hooker's voice the spectacle approves !

XXXIII

REGRETS

WOULD that our scrupulous Sires had dared to leave
 Less scanty measure of those graceful rites

And usages, whose due return invites
A stir of mind too natural to deceive ;
Giving to Memory help when she would weave
A crown for Hope !—I dread the boasted lights
That all too often are but fiery blights,
Killing the bud o'er which in vain we grieve.
Go, seek, when Christmas snows discomfort bring,
The counter Spirit found in some gay church
Green with fresh holly, every pew a perch
In which the linnet or the thrush might sing,
Merry and loud and safe from prying search,
Strains offered only to the genial Spring.

XXXIV

MUTABILITY

FROM low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail ;
A musical but melancholy chime,
Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
Truth fails not ; but her outward forms that bear
The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and plain
And is no more ; drop like the tower sublime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

XXXV

OLD ABBEYS

MONASTIC Domes ! following my downward way,
Untouched by due regret I marked your fall !
Now, ruin, beauty, ancient stillness, all
Dispose to judgments temperate as we lay
On our past selves in life's declining day :
For as, by discipline of Time made wise,
We learn to tolerate the infirmities
And faults of others—gently as he may,
So with our own the mild Instructor deals,
Teaching us to forget them or forgive.
Perversely curious, then, for hidden ill
Why should we break Time's charitable seals ?

Once ye were holy, ye are holy still ;
Your spirit freely let me drink, and live !

XXXVI

EMIGRANT FRENCH CLERGY

EVEN while I speak, the sacred roofs of France
Are shattered into dust ; and self-exiled
From altars threatened, levelled, or defiled,
Wander the Ministers of God, as chance
Opens a way for life, or consonance
Of faith invites. More welcome to no land
The fugitives than to the British strand,
Where priest and layman with the vigilance
Of true compassion greet them. Creed and test
Vanish before the unreserved embrace
Of catholic humanity :—distrest
They came,—and, while the moral tempest roars
Throughout the Country they have left, our shores
Give to their Faith a fearless resting-place.

XXXVII

CONGRATULATION

THUS all things lead to Charity secured
By THEM who blessed the soft and happy gale
That landward urged the great Deliverer's sail,
Till in the sunny bay his fleet was moored !
Propitious hour !—had we, like them, endured
Sore stress of apprehension, with a mind
Sickened by injuries, dreading worse designed,
From month to month trembling and unassured,
How had we then rejoiced ! But we have felt,
As a loved substance, their futurity :
Good, which they dared not hope for, we have seen ;
A State whose generous will through earth is dealt ;
A State—which, balancing herself between
Licence and slavish order, dares be free.

XXXVIII

NEW CHURCHES

BUT liberty, and triumphs on the Main,
And laurelled armies, not to be withstood—
What serve they? if, on transitory good
Intent, and sedulous of abject gain,
The State (ah, surely not preserved in vain !)
Forbear to shape due channels which the Flood

Of sacred truth may enter—till it brood
O'er the wide realm, as o'er the Egyptian plain
The all-sustaining Nile. No more—the time
Is conscious of her want ; through England's bounds,
In rival haste, the wished-for Temples rise !
I hear their sabbath bells' harmonious chime
Float on the breeze—the heavenliest of all sounds
That vale or hill prolongs or multiplies !

XXXIX

CHURCH TO BE ERECTED

BE this the chosen site ; the virgin sod,
Moistened from age to age by dewy eve,
Shall disappear, and grateful earth receive
The corner-stone from hands that build to God.
Yon reverend hawthorns, hardened to the rod
Of winter storms, yet budding cheerfully ;
Those forest oaks of Druid memory,
Shall long survive, to shelter the Abode
Of genuine Faith. Where, haply, 'mid this band
Of daisies, shepherds sate of yore and wove
May-garlands, there let the holy altar stand
For kneeling adoration ;—while—above,
Broods, visibly portrayed, the mystic Dove,
That shall protect from blasphemy the Land.

XL

CONTINUED

MINE ear has rung, my spirit sunk subdued,
Sharing the strong emotion of the crowd,
When each pale brow to dread hosannas bowed
While clouds of incense mounting veiled the rood,
That glimmered like a pine-tree dimly viewed
Through Alpine vapours. Such appalling rite
Our Church prepares not, trusting to the might
Of simple truth with grace divine imbued ;
Yet will we not conceal the precious Cross,
Like men ashamed : the Sun with his first smile
Shall greet that symbol crowning the low Pile :
And the fresh air of incense-breathing morn
Shall wooingly embrace it ; and green moss
Creep round its arms through centuries unborn.

XLI

NEW CHURCHYARD

THE encircling ground, in native turf arrayed,
 Is now by solemn consecration given
 To social interests, and to favouring Heaven ;
 And where the rugged colts their gambols played,
 And wild deer bounded through the forest glade,
 Unchecked as when by merry Outlaw driven,
 Shall hymns of praise resound at morn and even ;
 And soon, full soon, the lonely Sexton's spade
 Shall wound the tender sod. Encincture small,
 But infinite its grasp of weal and woe !
 Hopes, fears, in never-ending ebb and flow ;—
 The spousal trembling, and the "dust to dust,"
 The prayers, the contrite struggle, and the trust
 That to the Almighty Father looks through all.

XLII

CATHEDRALS, ETC.

OPEN your gates, ye everlasting Piles !
 Types of the spiritual Church which God hath reared ;
 Not loth we quit the newly-hallowed sward
 And humble altar, 'mid your sumptuous aisles
 To kneel, or thrud your intricate defiles,
 Or down the nave to pace in motion slow ;
 Watching, with upward eye, the tall tower grow
 And mount, at every step, with living wiles
 Instinct—to rouse the heart and lead the will
 By a bright ladder to the world above.
 Open your gates, ye Monuments of love
 Divine ! thou Lincoln, on thy sovereign hill !
 Thou, stately York ! and Ye, whose splendours cheer
 Isis and Cam, to patient Science dear !

XLIII

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

TAX not the royal Saint with vain expense,
 With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned—
 Albeit labouring for a scanty band
 Of white-robed Scholars only—this immense
 And glorious Work of fine intelligence !
 Give all thou canst ; high Heaven rejects the lore
 Of nicely-calculated less or more ;
 So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense

These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die ;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

XLIV

THE SAME

WHAT awful perspective ! while from our sight
With gradual stealth the lateral windows hide
Their Portraitures, their stone-work glimmers, dyed
In the soft chequerings of a sleepy light.
Martyr, or King, or sainted Eremite,
Whoe'er ye be, that thus, yourselves unseen,
Imbue your prison-bars with solemn sheen,
Shine on, until ye fade with coming Night !—
But, from the arms of silence—list ! O list !
The music bursteth into second life ;
The notes luxuriate, every stone is kissed
By sound, or ghost of sound, in mazy strife ;
Heart-thrilling strains, that cast, before the eye
Of the devout, a veil of ecstasy !

XLV

CONTINUED

THEY dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of fear
Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here ;
Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam :
Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam
Melts, if it cross the threshold ; where the wreath
Of awe-struck wisdom droops : or let my path
Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-like dome
Hath typified by reach of daring art
Infinity's embrace ; whose guardian crest,
The silent Cross, among the stars shall spread
As now, when She hath also seen her breast
Filled with mementos, satiate with its part
Of grateful England's overflowing Dead.

XLVI

EJACULATION

GLORY to God ! and to the Power who came
In filial duty, clothed with love divine,

That made his human tabernacle shine
 Like Ocean burning with purpureal flame ;
 Or like the Alpine Mount, that takes its name
 From roseate hues, far kenne'd at morn and even
 In hours of peace, or when the storm is driven
 Along the nether region's rugged frame !
 Earth prompts—Heaven urges ; let us seek the light,
 Studious of that pure intercourse begun
 When first our infant brows their lustre won ;
 So, like the Mountain, may we grow more bright
 From unimpeded commerce with the Sun,
 At the approach of all-involving night.

XLVII

CONCLUSION

WHY sleeps the future, as a snake enrolled,
 Coil within coil, at noon-tide ? For the WORD
 Yields, if with unpretentious faith explored,
 Power at whose touch the sluggard shall unfold
 His drowsy rings. Look forth !—that Stream behold,
 THAT STREAM upon whose bosom we have passed
 Floating at ease while nations have effaced
 Nations, and Death has gathered to his fold
 Long lines of mighty Kings—look forth, my Soul !
 (Nor in this vision be thou slow to trust)
 The living Waters, less and less by guilt
 Stained and polluted, brighten as they roll,
 Till they have reached the eternal City—built
 For the perfected Spirit of the just !

MEMORY

A PEN—to register ; a key—
 That winds through secret wards
 Are well assigned to Memory
 By allegoric Bards.
 As aptly, also, might be given
 A Pencil to her hand ;
 That, softening objects, sometimes even
 Outstrips the heart's demand ;
 That smooths foregone distress, the lines
 Of lingering care subdues,
 Long-vanished happiness refines,
 And clothes in brighter hues ;

Yet, like a tool of Fancy, works
Those Spectres to dilate
That startle Conscience, as she lurks
Within her lonely seat.

Oh! that our lives, which flee so fast,
In purity were such,
That not an image of the past
Should fear that pencil's touch!

Retirement then might hourly look
Upon a soothing scene,
Age steal to his allotted nook
Contented and serene;

With heart as calm as lakes that sleep,
In frosty moonlight glistening;
Or mountain rivers, where they creep
Along a channel smooth and deep,
To their own far-off murmurs listening.

(1823)

TO THE LADY FLEMING

ON SEEING THE FOUNDATION PREPARING FOR THE
ERECTION OF RYDAL CHAPEL, WESTMORELAND

I

BLEST is this Isle—our native Land;
Where battlement and moated gate
Are objects only for the hand
Of hoary Time to decorate;
Where shady hamlet, town that breathes
Its busy smoke in social wreaths,
No rampart's stern defence require,
Nought but the heaven-directed spire,
And steeple tower (with pealing bells
Far-heard)—our only citadels.

II

O Lady! from a noble line
Of chieftains sprung, who stoutly bore
The spear, yet gave to works divine
A bounteous help in days of yore,
(As records mouldering in the Dell
Of Nightshade¹ haply yet may tell;)

¹ Bekangs Ghyll—or the dell of Nightshade—in which stands St. Mary's Abbey in Low Furness.

To the Lady Fleming

Thee kindred aspirations moved
To build, within a vale beloved,
For Him upon whose high behests
All peace depends, all safety rests.

III

How fondly will the woods embrace
This daughter of thy pious care,
Lifting her front with modest grace
To make a fair recess more fair ;
And to exalt the passing hour ;
Or soothe it with a healing power
Drawn from the Sacrifice fulfilled,
Before this rugged soil was tilled,
Or human habitation rose
To interrupt the deep repose !

IV

Well may the villagers rejoice !
Nor heat, nor cold, nor weary ways,
Will be a hindrance to the voice
That would unite in prayer and praise ;
More duly shall wild wandering Youth
Receive the curb of sacred truth,
Shall tottering Age, bent earthward, hear
The Promise, with uplifted ear ;
And all shall welcome the new ray
Imparted to their sabbath-day.

V

Nor deem the Poet's hope misplaced,
His fancy cheated—that can see
A shade upon the future cast,
Of time's pathetic sanctity ;
Can hear the monitory clock
Sound o'er the lake with gentle shock
At evening, when the ground beneath
Is ruffled o'er with cells of death ;
Where happy generations lie,
Here tutored for eternity.

VI

Lives there a man whose sole delights
Are trivial pomp and city noise,
Hardening a heart that loathes or slights
What every natural heart enjoys ?

Who never caught a noon-tide dream
From murmur of a running stream ;
Could strip, for aught the prospect yields
To him, their verdure from the fields ;
And take the radiance from the clouds
In which the sun his setting shrouds.

VII

A soul so pitiably forlorn,
If such do on this earth abide,
May season apathy with scorn,
May turn indifference to pride ;
And still be not unblest—compared
With him who grovels, self-debarred
From all that lies within the scope
Of holy faith and christian hope ;
Or, shipwrecked, kindles on the coast
False fires, that others may be lost.

VIII

Alas ! that such perverted zeal
Should spread on Britain's favoured ground
That public order, private weal,
Should e'er have felt or feared a wound
From champions of the desperate law
Which from their own blind hearts they draw ;
Who tempt their reason to deny
God, whom their passions dare defy,
And boast that they alone are free
Who reach this dire extremity !

IX

But turn we from these " bold bad " men ;
The way, mild Lady ! that hath led
Down to their " dark opprobrious den,"
Is all too rough for Thee to tread.
Softly as morning vapours glide
Down Rydal-cove from Fairfield's side,
Should move the tenor of *his* song
Who means to charity no wrong ;
Whose offering gladly would accord
With this day's work, in thought and word.

X

Heaven prosper it ! may peace, and love,
And hope, and consolation, fall,

Through its meek influence, from above,
 And penetrate the hearts of all ;
 All who, around the hallowed Fane,
 Shall sojourn in this fair domain ;
 Grateful to Thee, while service pure,
 And ancient ordinance, shall endure,
 For opportunity bestowed
 To kneel together, and adore their God !

(1823)

ON THE SAME OCCASION

Oh ! gather whencesoe'er ye safely may
 The help which slackening Piety requires ;
 Nor deem that he perforce must go astray
 Who treads upon the footmarks of his sires.

WHEN in the antique age of bow and spear
 And feudal rapine clothed with iron mail,
 Came ministers of peace, intent to rear
 The Mother Church in yon sequestered vale ;
 Then, to her Patron Saint a previous rite
 Resounded with deep swell and solemn close,
 Through unremitting vigils of the night,
 Till from his couch the wished-for Sun uprose.
 He rose, and straight—as by divine command,
 They, who had waited for that sign to trace
 Their work's foundation, gave with careful hand
 To the high altar its determined place ;
 Mindful of Him who in the Orient born
 There lived, and on the cross his life resigned,
 And who, from out the regions of the morn,
 Issuing in pomp, shall come to judge mankind.
 So taught *their* creed ;—nor failed the eastern sky,
 'Mid these more awful feelings, to infuse
 The sweet and natural hopes that shall not die,
 Long as the sun his gladsome course renews.
 For us hath such prelude vigil ceased ;
 Yet still we plant, like men of elder days,
 Our christian altar faithful to the east,
 Whence the tall window drinks the morning rays ;
 That obvious emblem giving to the eye
 Of meek devotion, which erewhile it gave,
 That symbol of the dayspring from on high,
 Triumphant o'er the darkness of the grave.

(1823)

“A VOLANT TRIBE OF BARDS ON EARTH
ARE FOUND”

A VOLANT Tribe of Bards on earth are found,
Who, while the flattering Zephyrs round them play,
On “coignes of vantage” hang their nests of clay :
How quickly from that æëry hold unbound,
Dust for oblivion ! To the solid ground
Of nature trusts the Mind that builds for aye ;
Convinced that there, there only, she can lay
Secure foundations. As the year runs round,
Apart she toils within the chosen ring ;
While the stars shine, or while day’s purple eye
Is gently closing with the flowers of spring ;
Where even the motion of an Angel’s wing
Would interrupt the intense tranquillity
Of silent hills, and more than silent sky.
(1823)

“NOT LOVE, NOT WAR, NOR THE
TUMULTUOUS SWELL”

NOT Love, not War, nor the tumultuous swell
Of civil conflict, nor the wrecks of change,
Nor Duty struggling with afflictions strange—
Not these *alone* inspire the tuneful shell ;
But where untroubled peace and concord dwell,
There also is the Muse not loth to range,
Watching the twilight smoke of cot or grange,
Skyward ascending from a woody dell.
Meek aspirations please her, lone endeavour,
And sage content, and placid melancholy ;
She loves to gaze upon a crystal river—
Diaphanous because it travels slowly ;
Soft is the music that would charm for ever ;
The flower of sweetest smell is shy and lowly.
(1823)

TO ———¹

I

LET other bards of angels sing,
Bright suns without a spot ;
But thou art no such perfect thing :
Rejoice that thou art not !

¹ Written at Rydal Mount. To Mrs. Wordsworth.

Heed not tho' none should call thee fair;
 So, Mary, let it be
 If nought in loveliness compare
 With what thou art to me.
 True beauty dwells in deep retreats,
 Whose veil is unremoved
 Till heart with heart in concord beats,
 And the lover is beloved.

O DEARER far than light and life are dear,
 Full oft our human foresight I deplore;
 Trembling, through my unworthiness, with fear
 That friends, by death disjoined, may meet no more!
 Misgivings, hard to vanquish or control,
 Mix with the day, and cross the hour of rest;
 While all the future, for thy purer soul,
 With "sober certainties" of love is blest.
 That sigh of thine, not meant for human ear,
 Tells that these words thy humbleness offend;
 Yet bear me up—else faltering in the rear
 Of a steep march: support me to the end.
 Peace settles where the intellect is meek,
 And Love is dutiful in thought and deed;
 Through Thee communion with that Love I seek:
 The faith Heaven strengthens where *he* moulds the Creed.
 (1824)

"HOW RICH THAT FOREHEAD'S CALM
 EXPANSE" ¹

How rich that forehead's calm expanse!
 How bright that heaven-directed glance!
 —Waft her to glory, winged Powers,
 Ere sorrow be renewed,
 And intercourse with mortal hours
 Bring back a humbler mood!
 So looked Cecilia when she drew
 An Angel from his station;
 So looked; not ceasing to pursue
 Her tuneful adoration!
 But hand and voice alike are still;
 No sound *here* sweeps away the will

¹ Suggested by a Print at Coleorton Hall.

That gave it birth : in service meek
 One upright arm sustains the cheek,
 And one across the bosom lies—
 That rose, and now forgets to rise,
 Subdued by breathless harmonies
 Of meditative feeling ;
 Mute strains from worlds beyond the skies,
 Through the pure light of female eyes,
 Their sanctity revealing !

(1824)

TO

Look at the fate of summer flowers,
 Which blow at daybreak, droop e'er evensong ;
 And, grieved for their brief date, confess that ours,
 Measured by what we are and ought to be,
 Measured by all that, trembling, we foresee,
 Is not so long !

If human Life do pass away,
 Perishing yet more swiftly than the flower,
 If we are creatures of a *winter's* day ;
 What space hath Virgin's beauty to disclose
 Her sweets, and triumph o'er the breathing rose ?
 Not even an hour !

The deepest grove whose foliage hid
 The happiest lovers Arcady might boast,
 Could not the entrance of this thought forbid :
 O be thou wise as they, soul-gifted Maid !
 Nor rate too high what must so quickly fade,
 So soon be lost.

Then shall love teach some virtuous Youth
 " To draw, out of the object of his eyes,"
 The while on thee they gaze in simple truth,
 Hues more exalted, " a refined Form,"
 That dreads not age, nor suffers from the worm,
 And never dies.

(1824)

A FLOWER GARDEN

AT COLEORTON HALL, LEICESTERSHIRE

TELL me, ye Zephyrs ! that unfold,
 While fluttering o'er this gay Recess,

¹ Written at Rydal Mount.

Pinions that fanned the teeming mould
Of Eden's blissful wilderness,
Did only softly-stealing hours
There close the peaceful lives of flowers ?

Say, when the *moving* creatures saw
All kinds commingled without fear,
Prevailed a like indulgent law
For the still growths that prosper here ?
Did wanton fawn and kid forbear
The half-blown rose, the lily spare ?

Or peeped they often from their beds
And prematurely disappeared,
Devoured like pleasure ere it spreads
A bosom to the sun endeared ?
If such their harsh untimely doom,
It falls not *here* on bud or bloom.

All summer long the happy Eve
Of this fair Spot her flowers may bind,
Nor e'er, with ruffled fancy, grieve,
From the next glance she casts, to find
That love for little things by Fate
Is rendered vain as love for great.

Yet, where the guardian fence is wound,
So subtly are our eyes beguiled
We see not nor suspect a bound,
No more than in some forest wild ;
The sight is free as air—or crost
Only by art in nature lost.

And, though the jealous turf refuse
By random footsteps to be prest,
And feed on never-sullied dews,
Y^e, gentle breezes from the west,
With all the ministers of hope
Are tempted to this sunny slope

And hither throngs of birds resort ;
Some, inmates lodged in shady nests,
Some, perched on stems of stately port
That nod to welcome transient guests ;
While hare and leveret, seen at play,
Appear not more shut out than they.

Apt emblem (for reproof of pride)
This delicate Enclosure shows

To Lady E. B. and Hon. Miss P. 463

Of modest kindness, that would hide
The firm protection she bestows ;
Of manners, like its viewless fence,
Ensuring peace to innocence.

Thus spake the moral Muse—her wing
Abruptly spreading to depart,
She left that farewell offering,
Memento for some docile heart ;
That may respect the good old age
When Fancy was Truth's willing Page ;
And Truth would skim the flowery glade,
Though entering but as Fancy's Shade.

(1824)

TO THE LADY E. B. AND THE HON. MISS P.

Composed in the Grounds of Plas Newydd, near Llangollen, 1824.¹

A STREAM, to mingle with your favourite Dee,
Along the VALE OF MEDITATION² flows ;
So styled by those fierce Britons, pleased to see
In Nature's face the expression of repose ;
Or haply there some pious hermit chose
To live and die, the peace of heaven his aim ;
To whom the wild sequestered region owes
At this late day, its sanctifying name.

GLYN CAFAILLGAROGH, in the Cambrian tongue,
In ours, the VALE OF FRIENDSHIP, let *this* spot
Be named ; where, faithful to a low-roofed Cot,
On Deva's banks, ye have abode so long ;
Sisters in love, a love allowed to climb,
Even on this earth, above the reach of Time !

TO THE TORRENT AT THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE,
NORTH WALES, 1824

How art thou named ? In search of what strange land
From what huge height, descending ? Can such force
Of waters issue from a British source,
Or hath not Pindus fed thee, where the band

¹ In this Vale of Meditation my friend Jones resided, having been allowed by his diocesan to fix himself there without resigning his Living in Oxfordshire. He was with my wife and daughter and me when we visited these celebrated ladies who had retired, as one may say, into notice in this vale. [Cafaillgaroch, *e. g.* should be "Cyfaillgarwch."—*Ed.*]

² Glyn Myrvr.

464 Composed among Ruins of a Castle

Of Patriots scoop their freedom out, with hand
Desperate as thine? Or come the incessant shocks
From that young Stream, that smites the throbbing rocks
Of Viamala? There I seem to stand,
As in life's morn; permitted to behold,
From the dread chasm, woods climbing above woods,
In pomp that fades not; everlasting snows;
And skies that ne'er relinquish their repose;
Such power possess the family of floods
Over the minds of Poets, young or old!

COMPOSED AMONG THE RUINS OF A CASTLE IN NORTH WALES

THROUGH shattered galleries, 'mid roofless halls,
Wandering with timid footsteps oft betrayed,
The Stranger sighs, nor scruples to upbraid
Old Time, though he, gentlest among the Thralls
Of Destiny, upon these wounds hath laid
His lenient touches, soft as light that falls,
From the wan Moon, upon the towers and walls,
Light deepening the profoundest sleep of shade.
Relic of Kings! Wreck of forgotten wars,
To winds abandoned and the prying stars,
Time *loves* Thee! at his call the Seasons twine
Luxuriant wreaths around thy forehead hoar;
And, though vast pomp no changes can restore,
A soothing recompence, his gift, is thine!

(1824)

ELEGIAC STANZAS

ADDRESSED TO SIR G. H. B. UPON THE DEATH OF HIS
SISTER-IN-LAW¹

O FOR a dirge! But why complain?
Ask rather a triumphal strain
When FERMOR's race is run;
A garland of immortal boughs
To twine around the Christian's brows,
Whose glorious work is done.
We pay a high and holy debt:
No tears of passionate regret
Shall stain this votive lay;
Ill-worthy, Beaumont! were the grief
That flings itself on wild relief
When Saints have passed away.

¹ Mrs. Fermor.

Sad doom, at Sorrow's shrine to kneel,
For ever covetous to feel,
And impotent to bear !
Such once was hers—to think and think
On severed love, and only sink
From anguish to despair !

But nature to its inmost part
Faith had refined ; and to her heart
A peaceful cradle given :
Calm as the dew-drop's, free to rest
Within a breeze-fanned rose's breast
Till it exhales to Heaven.

Was ever Spirit that could bend
So graciously?—that could descend,
Another's need to suit,
So promptly from her lofty throne?—
In works of love, in these alone,
How restless, how minute !

Pale was her hue ; yet mortal cheek
Ne'er kindled with a livelier streak
When aught had suffered wrong,—
When aught that breathes had felt a wound ;
Such look the Oppressor might confound,
However proud and strong.

But hushed be every thought that springs
From out the bitterness of things ;
Her quiet is secure ;
No thorns can pierce her tender feet,
Whose life was, like the violet, sweet,
As climbing jasmine, pure—

As snowdrop on an infant's grave,
Or lily heaving with the wave
That feeds it and defends ;
As Vesper, ere the star hath kissed
The mountain top, or breathed the mist
That from the vale ascends.

Thou takest not away, O Death !
Thou strikest—absence perisheth,
Indifference is no more ;
The future brightens on our sight ;
For on the past hath fallen a light
That tempts us to adore.

CENOTAPH¹

By vain affections unenthralled,
 Though resolute when duty called
 To meet the world's broad eye,
 Pure as the holiest cloistered nun
 That ever feared the tempting sun,
 Did Fermor live and die.
 This Tablet, hallowed by her name,
 One heart-relieving tear may claim ;
 But if the pensive gloom
 Of fond regret be still thy choice,
 Exalt thy spirit, hear the voice
 Of Jesus from her tomb !

"I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE"
 (1824)

EPITAPH²

IN THE CHAPEL-YARD OF LANGDALE, WESTMORELAND

By playful smiles, (alas ! too oft
 A sad heart's sunshine, by a soft
 And gentle nature, and a free
 Yet modest hand of charity,
 Through life was OWEN LLOYD endeared
 To young and old ; and how revered

¹ See "Elegiac Stanzas. Addressed to Sir G. H. B. upon the death of his Sister-in-Law" (p. 464).

In affectionate remembrance of Frances Fermor, whose remains are deposited in the church of Claines, near Worcester, this stone is erected by her sister, Dame Margaret, wife of Sir George Beaumont, Bart., who, feeling not less than the love of a brother for the deceased, commends this memorial to the care of his heirs and successors in the possession of this place.

² Owen Lloyd, the subject of this epitaph, was born at Old Brathay, near Ambleside, and was the son of Charles Lloyd and his wife Sophia (née Pemberton), both of Birmingham, who came to reside in this part of the country soon after their marriage. They had many children, both sons and daughters, of whom the most remarkable was the subject of this epitaph. He was educated under Mr. Dawes, at Ambleside, Dr. Butler, of Shrewsbury, and lastly at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he would have been greatly distinguished as a scholar but for inherited infirmities of bodily constitution, which, from early childhood, affected his mind. His love for the neighbourhood in which he was born, and his sympathy with the habits and characters of the mountain yeomanry, in conjunction with irregular spirits, that unfitted him for facing duties in situations to which he was unaccustomed, induced him to accept the retired curacy of Langdale. How much he was beloved and honoured there, and with what feelings he discharged his duty under the oppression of severe malady, is set forth, though imperfectly, in the epitaph.

Had been that pious spirit, a tide
 Of humble mourners testified,
 When, after pains dispensed to prove
 The measure of God's chastening love,
 Here, brought from far, his corse found rest,—
 Fulfilment of his own request ;—
 Urged less for this Yew's shade, though he
 Planted with such fond hope the tree ;
 Less for the love of stream and rock,
 Dear as they were, than that his Flock,
 When they no more their Pastor's voice
 Could hear to guide them in their choice
 Through good and evil, help might have,
 Admonished, from his silent grave,
 Of righteousness, of sins forgiven,
 For peace on earth and bliss in heaven.

(1824)

THE CONTRAST

THE PARROT AND THE WREN

I

WITHIN her gilded cage confined,
 I saw a dazzling Belle,
 A Parrot of that famous kind
 Whose name is NON-PAREIL.

Like beads of glossy jet her eyes ;
 And, smoothed by Nature's skill,
 With pearl or gleaming agate vies
 Her finely-curved bill.

Her plummy mantle's living hues
 In mass opposed to mass,
 Outshine the splendour that imbues
 The robes of pictured glass.

And, sooth to say, an apter Mate
 Did never tempt the choice
 Of feathered Thing most delicate
 In figure and in voice.

But, exiled from Australian bowers,
 And singleness her lot,
 She trills her song with tutored powers,
 Or mocks each casual note.

No more of pity for regrets
 With which she may have striven !

Now but in wantonness she frets,
Or spite, if cause be given ;

Arch, volatile, a sportive bird
By social glee inspired ;
Ambitious to be seen or heard,
And pleased to be admired !

This moss-lined shed, green, soft, and dry,
Harbours a self-contented Wren,
Not shunning man's abode, though shy,
Almost as thought itself, of human ken.

Strange places, coverts unendeared,
She never tried ; the very nest
In which this Child of Spring was reared,
Is warmed, thro' winter, by her feathery breast.

To the bleak winds she sometimes gives
A slender unexpected strain ;
Proof that the hermitess still lives,
Though she appear not, and be sought in vain.

Say, Dora ! tell me, by yon placid moon,
If called to choose between the favoured pair,
Which would you be,—the bird of the saloon
By lady-fingers tended with nice care,
Caressed, applauded, upon dainties fed,
Or Nature's DARKLING of this mossy shed ?

(1825)

TO A SKYLARK¹

ETHEREAL minstrel ! pilgrim of the sky !
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound ?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground ?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still !

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood ;
A privacy of glorious light is thine ;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine ;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam ;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home !

(1825)

¹ Written at Rydal Mount.

"ERE WITH COLD BEADS OF MIDNIGHT
DEW" ¹

ERE with cold beads of midnight dew
 Had mingled tears of thine,
 I grieved, fond Youth ! that thou shouldst sue
 To haughty Geraldine.

Immoveable by generous sighs
 She glories in a train
 Who drag, beneath our native skies,
 An oriental chain.

Pine not like them with arms across,
 Forgetting in thy care
 How the fast-rooted trees can toss
 Their branches in mid air.

The humblest rivulet will take
 Its own wild liberties ;
 And, every day, the imprisoned lake
 Is flowing in the breeze.

Then, crouch no more on suppliant knee,
 But scorn with scorn outbrave ;
 A Briton, even in love, should be
 A subject, not a slave !

(1826)

ODE

COMPOSED ON MAY MORNING ²

WHILE from the purpling east departs
 The star that led the dawn,
 Blithe Flora from her couch upstarts,
 For May is on the lawn.
 A quickening hope, a freshening glee,
 Foreran the expected Power,

¹ Written at Rydal Mount. Suggested by the condition of a friend.

² This and the following poem originated in the lines "How delicate the leafy veil," etc.—My daughter and I left Rydal Mount upon a tour through our mountains with Mr. and Mrs. Carr in the month of May 1826, and as we were going up the vale of Newlands I was struck with the appearance of the little chapel gleaming through the veil of half-opened leaves ; and the feeling which was then conveyed to my mind was expressed in the stanza referred to above. As in the case of "Liberty" and "Humanity," my first intention was to write only one poem, but subsequently I broke it into two, making additions to each part so as to produce a consistent and appropriate whole.

Whose first-drawn breath, from bush and tree,
Shakes off that pearly shower.

All Nature welcomes Her whose sway
Tempers the year's extremes ;
Who scattereth lustres o'er noon-day,
Like morning's dewy gleams ;
While mellow warble, sprightly trill,
The tremulous heart excite ;
And hums the balmy air to still
The balance of delight.

Time was, blest Power ! when youths and maids
At peep of dawn would rise,
And wander forth, in forest glades
Thy birth to solemnize.
Though mute the song—to grace the rite
Untouched the hawthorn bough,
Thy Spirit triumphs o'er the slight ;
Man changes, but not Thou !

Thy feathered Lieges bill and wings
In love's disport employ ;
Warmed by thy influence, creeping things
Awake to silent joy :
Queen art thou still for each gay plant
Where the slim wild deer roves ;
And served in depths where fishes haunt
Their own mysterious groves.

Cloud-piercing peak, and trackless heath,
Instinctive homage pay ;
Nor wants the dim-lit cave a wreath
To honour thee, sweet May !
Where cities fanned by thy brisk airs
Behold a smokeless sky,
Their puniest flower-pot-nursling dares
To open a bright eye.

And if, on this thy natal morn,
The pole, from which thy name
Hath not departed, stands forlorn
Of song and dance and game ;
Still from the village-green a vow
Aspires to thee address,
Wherever peace is on the brow,
Or love within the breast.

Yes ! where Love nestles thou canst teach
The soul to love the more ;
Hearts also shall thy lessons reach
That never loved before,
Stript is the haughty one of pride,
The bashful freed from fear,
While rising, like the ocean-tide,
In flows the joyous year.

Hush, feeble lyre ! weak words refuse
The service to prolong !
To yon exulting thrush the Muse
Entrusts the imperfect song ;
His voice shall chant, in accents clear,
Throughout the live-long day,
Till the first silver star appear,
The sovereignty of May.

THOUGH many suns have risen and set
Since thou, blithe May, wert born,
And Bards, who hailed thee, may forget
Thy gifts, thy beauty scorn ;
There are who to a birthday strain
Confine not harp and voice,
But evermore throughout thy reign
Are grateful and rejoice !

Delicious odours ! music sweet,
Too sweet to pass away !
Oh for a deathless song to meet
The soul's desire—a lay
That, when a thousand years are told,
Should praise thee, genial Power !
Through summer heat, autumnal cold,
And winter's dreariest hour.

Earth, sea, thy presence feel—nor less,
If yon ethereal blue
With its soft smile the truth express,
The heavens have felt it too.
The inmost heart of man if glad
Partakes a livelier cheer ;
And eyes that cannot but be sad
Let fall a brightened tear.

Since thy return, through days and weeks
Of hope that grew by stealth,
How many wan and faded cheeks
Have kindled into health !
The Old, by thee revived, have said,
" Another year is ours ; "
And wayworn Wanderers, poorly fed,
Have smiled upon thy flowers.

Who tripping lips a merry song
Amid his playful peers ?
The tender Infant who was long
A prisoner of fond fears ;
But now, when every sharp-edged blast
Is quiet in its sheath,
His Mother leaves him free to taste
Earth's sweetness in thy breath.

Thy help is with the weed that creeps
Along the humblest ground ;
No cliff so bare but on its steeps
Thy favours may be found ;
But most on some peculiar nook
That our own hands have drest,
Thou and thy train are proud to look,
And seem to love it best.

And yet how pleased we wander forth
When May is whispering, " Come !
Choose from the bowers of virgin earth
The happiest for your home ;
Heaven's bounteous love through me is spread
From sunshine, clouds, winds, waves,
Drops on the mouldering turret's head,
And on your turf-clad graves ! "

Such greeting heard, away with sighs
For lilies that must fade,
Or " the rathe primrose as it dies
Forsaken " in the shade !
Vernal fruitions and desires
Are linked in endless chase ;
While, as one kindly growth retires,
Another takes its place.

And what if thou, sweet May, hast known
Mishap by worm and blight ;

If expectations newly blown
 Have perished in thy sight ;
 If loves and joys, while up they sprung,
 Were caught as in a snare ;
 Such is the lot of all the young,
 However bright and fair.
 Lo ! Streams that April could not check
 Are patient of thy rule ;
 Gurgling in foamy water-break,
 Loitering in glassy pool :
 By thee, thee only, could be sent
 Such gentle mists as glide,
 Curling with unconfirmed intent,
 On that green mountain's side.
 How delicate the leafy veil
 Through which yon house of God
 Gleams, 'mid the peace of this deep dale
 By few but shepherds trod !
 And lowly huts, near beaten ways,
 No sooner stand attired
 In thy fresh wreaths, than they for praise
 Peep forth, and are admired.
 Season of fancy and of hope,
 Permit not for one hour,
 A blossom from thy crown to drop,
 Nor add to it a flower !
 Keep, lovely May, as if by touch
 Of self-restraining art,
 This modest charm of not too much,
 Part seen, imagined part !

(1826-1834)

"ONCE I COULD HAIL (HOWE'ER SERENE
 THE SKY)"¹

ONCE I could hail (howe'er serene the sky)
 The Moon re-entering her monthly round,

¹ "No faculty yet given me to espy
 The dusky Shape within her arms imbound."

Afterwards, when I could not avoid seeing it, I wondered at this, and the more so because, like most children, I had been in the habit of watching the moon through all her changes, and had often continued to gaze at it when at the full, till half blinded.

"Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone
 Wi' the auld moone in bir arme."

Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence, Percy's Reliques.

No faculty yet given me to espy
 The dusky Shape within her arms imbound,
 That thin memento of effulgence lost
 Which some have named her Predecessor's ghost.

Young, like the Crescent that above me shone,
 Nought I perceived within it dull or dim ;
 All that appeared was suitable to One
 Whose fancy had a thousand fields to skim ;
 To expectations spreading with wild growth,
 And hope that kept with me her plighted troth.

I saw (ambition quickening at the view)
 A silver boat launched on a boundless flood ;
 A pearly crest, like Dian's when it threw
 Its brightest splendour round a leafy wood ;
 But not a hint from under-ground, no sign
 Fit for the glimmering brow of Proserpine.

Or was it Dian's self that seemed to move
 Before me?—nothing blemished the fair sight ;
 On her I looked whom jocund Fairies love,
 Cynthia, who puts the *little* stars to flight,
 And by that thinning magnifies the great,
 For exaltation of her sovereign state.

And when I learned to mark the spectral Shape
 As each new Moon obeyed the call of Time,
 If gloom fell on me, swift was my escape ;
 Such happy privilege hath life's gay Prime,
 To see or not to see, as best may please
 A buoyant Spirit, and a heart at ease.

Now, dazzling Stranger ! when thou meet'st my glance,
 Thy dark Associate ever I discern ;
 Emblem of thoughts too eager to advance
 While I salute my joys, thoughts sad or stern ;
 Shades of past bliss, or phantoms that, to gain
 Their fill of promised lustre, wait in vain.

So changes mortal Life with fleeting years ;
 A mournful change, should Reason fail to bring
 The timely insight that can temper fears,
 And from vicissitude remove its sting ;
 While Faith aspires to seats in that domain
 Where joys are perfect—neither wax nor wane

"THE MASSY WAYS, CARRIED ACROSS THESE
HEIGHTS" ¹

THE massy Ways, carried across these heights
By Roman perseverance, are destroyed,
Or hidden under ground, like sleeping worms.
How venture then to hope that Time will spare
This humble Walk? Yet on the mountain's side
A POET's hand first shaped it ; and the steps
Of that same Bard—repeated to and fro
At morn, at noon, and under moonlight skies
Through the vicissitudes of many a year—
Forbade the weeds to creep o'er its grey line.
No longer, scattering to the heedless winds
The vocal raptures of fresh poesy,
Shall he frequent these precincts ; locked no more
In earnest converse with beloved Friends,
Here will he gather stores of ready bliss,
As from the beds and borders of a garden
Choice flowers are gathered ! But, if Power may spring
Out of a farewell yearning—favoured more
Than kindred wishes mated suitably
With vain regrets—the Exile would consign
This Walk, his loved possession, to the care
Of those pure Minds that reverence the Muse.

(1826)

THE PILLAR OF TRAJAN

WHERE towers are crushed, and unforbidden weeds
O'er mutilated arches shed their seeds ;
And temples, doomed to milder change, unfold
A new magnificence that vies with old ;
Firm in its pristine majesty hath stood
A votive Column, spared by fire and flood :—
And, though the passions of man's fretful race
Have never ceased to eddy round its base,
Not injured more by touch of meddling hands
Than a lone obelisk, 'mid Nubian sands,
Or aught in Syrian deserts left to save
From death the memory of the good and brave.
Historic figures round the shaft embost
Ascend, with lineaments in air not lost :

¹ The walk is what we call the *Far-terrace*, beyond the summer-house at Rydal Mount. The lines were written when we were afraid of being obliged to quit the place to which we were so much attached.

Still as he turns, the charmed spectator sees
Group winding after group with dream-like ease ;
Triumphs in sunbright gratitude displayed,
Or softly stealing into modest shade.

—So, pleased with purple clusters to entwine
Some lofty elm-tree, mounts the daring vine ;
The woodbine so, with spiral grace, and breathes
Wide-spreading odours from her flowery wreaths.

Borne by the Muse from rills in shepherds' ears
Murmuring but one smooth story for all years,
I gladly commune with the mind and heart
Of him who thus survives by classic art,
His actions witness, venerate his mien,
And study Trajan as by Pliny seen ;
Behold how fought the Chief whose conquering sword
Stretched far as earth might own a single lord ;
In the delight of moral prudence schooled,
How feelingly at home the Sovereign ruled ;
Best of the good—in pagan faith allied
To more than Man, by virtue deified.

Memorial Pillar ! 'mid the wrecks of Time
Preserve thy charge with confidence sublime—
The exultations, pomps, and cares of Rome,
Whence half the breathing world received its doom ;
Things that recoil from language ; that, if shown
By apter pencil, from the light had flown.
A Pontiff, Trajan *here* the Gods implores,
There greets an Embassy from Indian shores ;
Lo ! he harangues his cohorts—*there* the storm
Of battle meets him in authentic form !
Unharnessed, naked, troops of Moorish horse
Sweep to the charge ; more high, the Dacian force,
To hoof and finger mailed ;—yet, high or low,
None bleed, and none lie prostrate but the foe ;
In every Roman, through all turns of fate,
Is Roman dignity inviolate ;
Spirit in him pre-eminent, who guides,
Supports, adorns, and over all presides ;
Distinguished only by inherent state
From honoured Instruments that round him wait ;
Rise as he may, his grandeur scorns the test
Of outward symbol, nor will deign to rest
On aught by which another is deprest.
—Alas ! that One thus disciplined could toil
To enslave whole nations on their native soil ;

On Seeing a Needlecase 477

So emulous of Macedonian fame,
That, when his age was measured with his aim,
He drooped, 'mid else unclouded victories,
And turned his eagles back with deep-drawn sighs :
O weakness of the Great ! O folly of the Wise !

Where now the haughty Empire that was spread
With such fond hope ? her very speech is dead ;
Yet glorious Art the power of Time defies,
And Trajan still, through various enterprise,
Mounts, in this fine illusion, toward the skies :
Still are we present with the imperial Chief,
Nor cease to gaze upon the bold Relief
Till Rome, to silent marble unconfined,
Becomes with all her years a vision of the Mind.

(1826)

ON SEEING A NEEDLECASE IN THE FORM OF A HARP

THE WORK OF E. M. S.

Frowns are on every Muse's face,
Reproaches from their lips are sent,
That mimicry should thus disgrace
The noble Instrument.

A very Harp in all but size !
Needles for strings in apt gradation !
Minerva's self would stigmatize
The unclassic profanation.

Even her *own* needle that subdued
Arachne's rival spirit,
Though wrought in Vulcan's happiest mood,
Such honour could not merit.

And this, too, from the Laureate's Child,
A living lord of melody !
How will her Sire be reconciled
To the refined indignity ?

I spake, when whispered a low voice,
"Bard ! moderate your ire ;
Spirits of all degrees rejoice
In presence of the lyre.

The Minstrels of Pygmean bands,
Dwarf Genii, moonlight-loving Fays,
Have shells to fit their tiny hands
And suit their slender lays.

Some, still more delicate of ear,
 Have lutes (believe my words)
 Whose framework is of gossamer,
 While sunbeams are the chords.
 Gay Sylphs this miniature will court,
 Made vocal by their brushing wings,
 And sullen Gnomes will learn to sport
 Around its polished strings ;
 Whence strains to love-sick maiden dear,
 While in her lonely bower she tries
 To cheat the thought she cannot cheer,
 By fanciful embroideries.
 Trust, angry Bard ! a knowing Sprite,
 Nor think the Harp her lot deplores !
 Though 'mid the stars the Lyre shine bright,
 Love *stoops* as fondly as he soars."

(1827)

TO —

HAPPY the feeling from the bosom thrown
 In perfect shape (whose beauty Time shall spare
 Though a breath made it) like a bubble blown
 For summer pastime into wanton air ;
 Happy the thought best likened to a stone
 Of the sea-beach, when, polished with nice care,
 Veins it discovers exquisite and rare,
 Which for the loss of that moist gleam atone
 That tempted first to gather it. That here,
 O chief of Friends ! such feelings I present,
 To thy regard, with thoughts so fortunate,
 Were a vain notion ; but the hope is dear,
 That thou, if not with partial joy elate,
 Wilt smile upon this gift with more than mild content !¹

(1827)

"HER ONLY PILOT THE SOFT BREEZE"

HER only pilot the soft breeze, the boat
 Lingers, but Fancy is well satisfied ;
 With keen-eyed Hope, with Memory, at her side,
 And the glad Muse at liberty to note
 All that to each is precious, as we float
 Gently along ; regardless who shall chide

¹ "Something less than joy, but more than dull content."
Countess of Winchelsea.

If the heavens smile, and leave us free to glide,
 Happy Associates breathing air remote
 From trivial cares. But, Fancy and the Muse,
 Why have I crowded this small bark with you
 And others of your kind, ideal crew !
 While here sits One whose brightness owes its hues
 To flesh and blood ; no Goddess from above,
 No fleeting Spirit, but my own true love ?
 (1827)

“WHY, MINSTREL, THESE UNTUNEFUL
 MURMURINGS ”

“WHY, Minstrel, these untuneful murmurings—
 Dull, flagging notes that with each other jar ?”
 “Think, gentle Lady, of a Harp so far
 From its own country, and forgive the strings.”
 A simple answer ! but even so forth springs,
 From the Castalian fountain of the heart,
 The Poetry of Life, and all *that* Art
 Divine of words quickening insensate things.
 From the submissive necks of guiltless men
 Stretched on the block, the glittering axe recoils ;
 Sun, moon, and stars, all struggle in the toils
 Of mortal sympathy ; what wonder then
 That the poor Harp distempered music yields
 To its sad Lord, far from his native fields ?
 (1827)

TO S. H.

Excuse is needless when with love sincere
 Of occupation, not by fashion led,
 Thou turn’st the Wheel that slept with dust o’erspread ;
 My nerves from no such murmur shrink,—tho’ near,
 Soft as the Dorhawk’s to a distant ear,
 When twilight shades darken the mountain’s head.
 Even She who toils to spin our vital thread
 Might smile on work, O Lady, once so dear
 To household virtues. Venerable Art,
 Torn from the Poor ! yet shall kind Heaven protect
 Its own ; though Rulers, with undue respect,
 Trusting to crowded factory and mart
 And proud discoveries of the intellect,
 Heed not the pillage of man’s ancient heart.
 (1827)

DECAY OF PIETY

Oft have I seen, ere Time had ploughed my cheek
 Matrons and Sires—who, punctual to the call
 Of their loved Church, on fast or festival
 Through the long year the house of Prayer would seek;
 By Christmas snows, by visitation bleak
 Of Easter winds, unscared, from hut or hall
 They came to lowly bench or sculptured stall,
 But with one fervour of devotion meek.
 I see the places where they once were known,
 And ask, surrounded even by kneeling crowds,
 Is ancient Piety for ever flown?
 Alas! even then they seemed like fleecy clouds
 That, struggling through the western sky, have won
 Their pensive light from a departed sun!
 (1827)

"SCORN NOT THE SONNET"

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
 Mindless of its just honours; with this key
 Shakspeare unlocked his heart; the melody
 Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
 A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
 With it Camœns soothed an exile's grief;
 The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
 Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
 His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,
 It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faeryland
 To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
 Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
 The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
 Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!
 (1827)

"FAIR PRIME OF LIFE! WERE IT ENOUGH
TO GILD"

FAIR Prime of life! were it enough to gild
 With ready sunbeams every straggling shower;
 And, if an unexpected cloud should lower,
 Swiftly thereon a rainbow arch to build
 For Fancy's errands,—then, from fields half-tilled
 Gathering green weeds to mix with poppy flower,
 Thee might thy Minions crown, and chant thy power,
 Unpitied by the wise, all censure stilled.

'Pleasure in Poetic Pains' 481

Ah ! show that worthier honours are thy due ;
Fair Prime of life ! arouse the deeper heart ;
Confirm the Spirit glorying to pursue
Some path of steep ascent and lofty aim ;
And, if there be a joy that slights the claim
Of grateful memory, bid that joy depart.

(1827)

RETIREMENT

IF the whole weight of what we think and feel,
Save only far as thought and feeling blend
With action, were as nothing, patriot Friend !
From thy remonstrance would be no appeal ;
But to promote and fortify the weal
Of our own Being is her paramount end ;
A truth which they alone shall comprehend
Who shun the mischief which they cannot heal.
Peace in these feverish times is sovereign bliss :
Here, with no thirst but what the stream can slake,
And startled only by the rustling brake,
Cool air I breathe ; while the unincumbered mind
By some weak aims at services assigned
To gentle Natures, thanks not Heaven amiss.

(1827)

"THERE IS A PLEASURE IN POETIC PAINS"

*THERE is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only Poets know ;—'twas rightly said ;
Whom could the Muses else allure to tread
Their smoothest paths, to wear their lightest chains ?
When happiest Fancy has inspired the strains,
How oft the malice of one luckless word
Pursues the Enthusiast to the social board,
Haunts him belated on the silent plains !
Yet he repines not, if his thought stand clear,
At last, of hindrance and obscurity,
Fresh as the star that crowns the brow of morn ;
Bright, speckless, as a softly-moulded tear
The moment it has left the virgin's eye,
Or rain-drop lingering on the pointed thorn.*

(1827)

RECOLLECTION OF THE PORTRAIT OF KING
HENRY EIGHTH, TRINITY LODGE, CAMBRIDGE

THE imperial Stature, the colossal stride,
Are yet before me ; yet do I behold

482 'Philoctetes in the Lemnian Isle'

The broad full visage, chest of amplest mould,
 The vestments 'broidered with barbaric pride :
 And lo ! a poniard, at the Monarch's side,
 Hangs ready to be grasped in sympathy
 With the keen threatenings of that fulgent eye,
 Below the white-rimmed bonnet, far-described.
 Who trembles now at thy capricious mood ?
 'Mid those surrounding Worthies, haughty King,
 We rather think, with grateful mind sedate,
 How Providence educeth, from the spring
 Of lawless will, unlooked-for streams of good,
 Which neither force shall check nor time abate !
 (1827)

"WHEN PHILOCTETES IN THE LEMNIAN ISLE"

WHEN Philoctetes in the Lemnian isle
 Like a form sculptured on a monument
 Lay couched ; on him or his dread bow unbent
 Some wild Bird oft might settle and beguile
 The rigid features of a transient smile,
 Disperse the tear, or to the sigh give vent,
 Slackening the pains of ruthless banishment
 From his loved home, and from heroic toil.
 And trust that spiritual Creatures round us move,
 Griefs to allay which Reason cannot heal ;
 Yea, veriest reptiles have sufficed to prove
 To fettered wretchedness, that no Bastile
 Is deep enough to exclude the light of love,
 Though man for brother man has ceased to feel.
 (1827)

"WHILE ANNA'S PEERS AND EARLY PLAY- MATES TREAD"

WHILE Anna's peers and early playmates tread,
 In freedom, mountain-turf and river's marge ;
 Or float with music in the festal barge ;
 Rein the proud steed, or through the dance are led ;
 Her doom it is to press a weary bed—
 Till oft her guardian Angel, to some charge
 More urgent called, will stretch his wings at large,
 And friends too rarely prop the languid head.
 Yet, helped by Genius—untired comforter,
 The presence even of a stuffed Owl for her

To the Cuckoo

483

Can cheat the time ; sending her fancy out
To ivied castles and to moonlight skies,
Though he can neither stir a plume, nor shout ;
Nor veil, with restless film, his staring eyes.

(1827)

TO THE CUCKOO

Nor the whole warbling grove in concert heard
When sunshine follows shower, the breast can thrill
Like the first summons, Cuckoo ! of thy bill,
With its twin notes inseparably paired.
The captive 'mid damp vaults unsunned, unaided,
Measuring the periods of his lonely doom,
That cry can reach ; and to the sick man's room
Sends gladness, by no languid smile declared.
The lordly eagle-race through hostile search
May perish ; time may come when never more
The wilderness shall hear the lion roar ;
But, long as cock shall crow from household perch
To rouse the dawn, soft gales shall speed thy wing,
And thy erratic voice be faithful to the Spring !

(1827)

THE INFANT M—— M——¹

UNQUIET Childhood here by special grace
Forgets her nature, opening like a flower
That neither feeds nor wastes its vital power
In painful struggles. Months each other chase,
And nought untunes that Infant's voice ; no trace
Of fretful temper sullies her pure cheek ;
Prompt, lively, self-sufficing, yet so meek
That one enrapt with gazing on her face
(Which even the placid innocence of death
Could scarcely make more placid, heaven more bright)
Might learn to picture, for the eye of faith,
The Virgin, as she shone with kindred light ;
A nursling couched upon her mother's knee,
Beneath some shady palm of Galilee.

(1827)

TO ROTH A Q——²

ROTHA, my Spiritual Child ! this head was grey
When at the sacred font for thee I stood ;

¹ The infant was Mary Monkhouse, the only daughter of my friend and cousin, Thomas Monkhouse.

² Rotha, the daughter of my son-in-law, Mr. Quillinan.

484 To ——, in her Seventieth Year

Pledged till thou reach the verge of womanhood,
 And shalt become thy own sufficient stay :
 Too late, I feel, sweet Orphan ! was the day
 For stedfast hope the contract to fulfil ;
 Yet shall my blessing hover o'er thee still,
 Embodied in the music of this Lay,
 Breathed forth beside the peaceful mountain Stream¹
 Whose murmur soothed thy languid Mother's ear
 After her throes, this Stream of name more dear
 Since thou dost bear it,—a memorial theme
 For others ; for thy future self, a spell
 To summon fancies out of Time's dark cell.

(1827)

TO ——, IN HER SEVENTIETH YEAR²

SUCH age how beautiful ! O Lady bright,
 Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined
 By favouring Nature and a saintly Mind
 To something purer and more exquisite
 Than flesh and blood ; whene'er thou meet'st my sight,
 When I behold thy blanched unwithered cheek,
 Thy temples fringed with locks of gleaming white,
 And head that droops because the soul is meek,
 Thee with the welcome Snowdrop I compare ;
 That child of winter, prompting thoughts that climb
 From desolation toward the genial prime ;
 Or with the Moon conquering earth's misty air,
 And filling more and more with crystal light
 As pensive Evening deepens into night.

(1827)

"IN MY MIND'S EYE A TEMPLE, LIKE A CLOUD"

In my mind's eye a Temple, like a cloud
 Slowly surmounting some invidious hill,
 Rose out of darkness : the bright Work stood still :
 And might of its own beauty have been proud,
 But it was fashioned and to God was vowed
 By Virtues that diffused, in every part,
 Spirit divine through forms of human art :
 Faith had her arch—her arch, when winds blow loud,

¹ The river Rotha, that flows into Windermere from the lakes of Grasmere and Rydal.

² Lady Fitzgerald, as described to me by Lady Beaumont.

‘Go back to Antique Ages’ 485

Into the consciousness of safety thrilled ;
And Love her towers of dread foundation laid
Under the grave of things ; Hope had her spire
Star-high, and pointing still to something higher
Trembling I gazed, but heard a voice—it said,
“ Hell-gates are powerless Phantoms when *we* build.”
(1827)

“GO BACK TO ANTIQUE AGES, IF THINE
EYES”

Go back to antique ages, if thine eyes
The genuine mien and character would trace
Of the rash Spirit that still holds her place,
Prompting the world’s audacious vanities !
Go back, and see the Tower of Babel rise ;
The pyramid extend its monstrous base,
For some Aspirant of our short-lived race,
Anxious an aery name to immortalise.
There, too, ere wiles and politic dispute
Gave specious colouring to aim and act,
See the first mighty Hunter leave the brute—
To chase mankind, with men in armies packed
For his field-pastime high and absolute,
While, to dislodge his game, cities are sacked !
(1827)

IN THE WOODS OF RYDAL

WILD Redbreast ! hadst thou at Jemima’s lip
Pecked, as at mine, thus boldly, Love might say,
A half-blown rose had tempted thee to sip
Thy honey from her fangs ; but hallowed is the clay
Which she has trod to warm ; and I, whose head is grey,
Am not unworthy of thy fellowship ;
Nor could I let one thought—one notion—slip
That might thy sylvan confidence betray.
For are we not all His without whose care
Vouchsafed no sparrow falleth to the ground ?
Who gives his Angels wings to speed through air,
And rolls the planets through the blue profound ;
Then peck or perch, fond Flutterer ! nor forbear
To trust a Poet in still musings bound.
(1827)

"IF THESE BRIEF RECORDS:"

TO —

If these brief Records, by the Muses' art
 Produced as lonely Nature or the strife
 That animates the scenes of public life
 Inspired, may in thy leisure claim a part ;
 And if these Transcripts of the private heart
 Have gained a sanction from thy falling tears ;
 Then I repent not. But my soul hath fears
 Breathed from eternity ; for, as a dart
 Cleaves the blank air, Life flies : now every day
 Is but a glimmering spoke in the swift wheel
 Of the revolving week. Away, away,
 All fitful cares, all transitory zeal !
 So timely Grace the immortal wing may heal,
 And honour rest upon the senseless clay.

(1827)

A MORNING EXERCISE ¹

FANCY, who leads the pastimes of the glad,
 Full oft is pleased a wayward dart to throw ;
 Sending sad shadows after things not sad,
 Peopling the harmless fields with signs of woe :
 Beneath her sway, a simple forest cry
 Becomes an echo of man's misery.

Blithe ravens croak of death ; and when the owl
 Tries his two voices for a favourite strain—
Tu-whit—Tu-who! the unsuspecting fowl
 Forebodes mishap or seems but to complain ;
 Fancy, intent to harass and annoy,
 Can thus pervert the evidence of joy.

Through border wilds where naked Indians stray,
 Myriads of notes attest her subtle skill ;
 A feathered task-master cries, "WORK AWAY!"
 And, in thy iteration, "WHIP POOR WILL!" ²
 Is heard the spirit of a toil-worn slave,
 Lashed out of life, not quiet in the grave.

What wonder ? at her bidding, ancient lays
 Steeped in dire grief the voice of Philomel ;

¹ Written at Rydal Mount. I could wish the last five stanzas of this to be read with the poem addressed to the skylark.

² See Waterton's *Wanderings in South America*.

And that fleet messenger of summer days,
The Swallow, twittered subject to like spell ;
But ne'er could Fancy bend the buoyant Lark
To melancholy service—hark ! O hark !

The daisy sleeps upon the dewy lawn,
Not lifting yet the head that evening bowed ;
But *He* is risen, a later star of dawn,
Glittering and twinkling near yon rosy cloud ;
Bright gem instinct with music, vocal spark ;
The happiest bird that sprang out of the Ark !

Hail, blest above all kinds !—Supremely skilled
Restless with fixed to balance, high with low,
Thou leav'st the halcyon free her hopes to build
On such forbearance as the deep may show ;
Perpetual flight, unchecked by earthly ties,
Leav'st to the wandering bird of paradise.

Faithful, though swift as lightning, the meek dove ;
Yet more hath Nature reconciled in thee ;
So constant with thy downward eye of love,
Yet, in aerial singleness, so free ;
So humble, yet so ready to rejoice
In power of wing and never-wearied voice.

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
Mount, daring warbler !—that love-prompted strain,
(Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond)
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain :
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege ! to sing
All independent of the leafy spring.

How would it please old Ocean to partake,
With sailors longing for a breeze in vain,
The harmony thy notes most gladly make
Where earth resembles most his own domain !
Urania's self might welcome with pleased ear
These matins mounting towards her native sphere.

Chanter by heaven attracted, whom no bars
To day-light known deter from that pursuit,
'Tis well that some sage instinct, when the stars
Come forth at evening, keeps Thee still and mute ;
For not an eyelid could to sleep incline
Wert thou among them, singing as they shine !

The Wishing-gate

THE WISHING-GATE¹

HOPE rules a land for ever green :
 All powers that serve the bright-eyed Queen
 Are confident and gay ;
 Clouds at her bidding disappear ;
 Points she to aught?—the bliss draws near,
 And Fancy smooths the way.

Not such the land of Wishes—there
 Dwell fruitless day-dreams, lawless prayer,
 And thoughts with things at strife ;
 Yet how forlorn, should *ye* depart,
 Ye superstitions of the *heart*,
 How poor, were human life !

When magic lore abjured its might,
 Ye did not forfeit one dear right,
 One tender claim abate ;
 Witness this symbol of your sway,
 Surviving near the public way,
 The rustic Wishing-gate !

Inquire not if the faery race
 Shed kindly influence on the place,
 Ere northward they retired ;
 If here a warrior left a spell,
 Panting for glory as he fell ;
 Or here a saint expired.

Enough that all around is fair,
 Composed with Nature's finest care,
 And in her fondest love—
 Peace to embosom and content—
 To overawe the turbulent,
 The selfish to reprove.

Yea ! even the Stranger from afar,
 Reclining on this moss-grown bar,
 Unknowing, and unknown,
 The infection of the ground partakes,
 Longing for his Beloved—who makes
 All happiness her own.

¹ In the vale of Grasmere, by the side of the old Ambleside, is a gate, which, time out of mind, the Wishing-gate, from a belief that wishes formed or indulged there have a favourable issue.

The Wishing-gate Destroyed 489

Then why should conscious Spirits fear
The mystic stirrings that are here,
The ancient faith disclaim?
The local Genius ne'er befriends
Desires whose course in folly ends,
Whose just reward is shame.

Smile if thou wilt, but not in scorn,
If some, by ceaseless pains outworn,
Here crave an easier lot;
If some have thirsted to renew
A broken vow, or bind a true,
With firmer, holier knot.

And not in vain, when thoughts are cast
Upon the irrevocable past,
Some Penitent sincere
May for a worthier future sigh,
While trickles from his downcast eye
No unavailing tear.

The Worldling, pining to be freed
From turmoil, who would turn or speed
The current of his fate,
Might stop before this favoured scene,
At Nature's call, nor blush to lean
Upon the Wishing-gate.

The Sage, who feels how blind, how weak
Is man, though loth such help to *seek*,
Yet, passing, here might pause,
And thirst for insight to allay
Misgiving, while the crimson day
In quietness withdraws;

Or when the church-clock's knell profound
To Time's first step across the bound
Of midnight makes reply;
Time pressing on with starry crest,
To filial sleep upon the breast
Of dread eternity.

(1828)

THE WISHING-GATE DESTROYED

'Tis gone—with old belief and dream
That round it clung, and tempting scheme
Released from fear and doubt;

490 The Wishing-gate Destroyed

And the bright landscape too must lie,
By this blank wall, from every eye,
Relentlessly shut out.

Bear witness ye who seldom passed
That opening—but a look ye cast
Upon the lake below,
What spirit-stirring power it gained
From faith which here was entertained,
Though reason might say no.

Blest is that ground, where, o'er the springs
Of history, Glory claps her wings,
Fame sheds the exulting tear ;
Yet earth is wide, and many a nook
Unheard of is, like this, a book
For modest meanings dear.

It was in sooth a happy thought
That grafted, on so fair a spot,
So confident a token
Of coming good ;—the charm is fled,
Indulgent centuries spun a thread,
Which one harsh day has broken.

Alas ! for him who gave the word ;
Could he no sympathy afford,
Derived from earth or heaven,
To hearts so oft by hope betrayed ;
Their very wishes wanted aid
Which here was freely given ?

Where, for the love-lorn maiden's wound,
Will now so readily be found
A balm of expectation ?
Anxious for far-off children, where
Shall mothers breathe a like sweet air
Of home-felt consolation ?

And not unfelt will prove the loss
'Mid trivial care and petty cross
And each day's shallow grief ;
Though the most easily beguiled
Were oft among the first that smiled
At their own fond belief.

If still the reckless change we mourn,
A reconciling thought may turn
To harm that might lurk here,

Ere judgment prompted from within
Fit aims, with courage to begin,
And strength to persevere.

Not Fortune's slave is Man : our state
Enjoins, while firm resolves await

On wishes just and wise.
That strenuous action follow both,
And life be one perpetual growth
Of heaven-ward enterprise.

So taught, so trained, we boldly face
All accidents of time and place ;

Whatever props may fail,
Trust in that sovereign law can spread
New glory o'er the mountain's head,
Fresh beauty through the vale.

That truth informing mind and heart,
The simplest cottager may part,
Ungrieved, with charm and spell ;
And yet, lost Wishing-gate, to thee
The voice of grateful memory
Shall bid a kind farewell !

(1828)

A JEWISH FAMILY

IN A SMALL VALLEY OPPOSITE ST. GOAR, UPON THE
RHINE¹

GENIUS of Raphael ! if thy wings
Might bear thee to this glen,
With faithful memory left of things
To pencil dear and pen,
Thou would'st forego the neighbouring Rhine,
And all his majesty—
A studious forehead to incline
O'er this poor family.
The Mother—her thou must have seen,
In spirit, ere she came
To dwell these rifted rocks between,
Or found on earth a name ;

¹ Coleridge, my daughter, and I, in 1828, passed a fortnight upon the banks of the Rhine. We were lodged under the hospitable roof of Mr. Aders of Gotesburg, but the day before we spent at St. Goar in rambles among the neighbouring valleys. It was at St. Goar that I saw the Jewish family here described. Though exceedingly poor, and in rags, they were not less beautiful than I have endeavoured to make them appear.

The Gleaner

An image, too, of that sweet Boy,
 Thy inspirations give—
 Of playfulness, and love, and joy,
 Predestined here to live.

Downcast, or shooting glances far,
 How beautiful his eyes,
 That blend the nature of the star
 With that of summer skies !

I speak as if of sense beguiled ;
 Uncounted months are gone,
 Yet am I with the Jewish Child,
 That exquisite Saint John.

I see the dark-brown curls, the brow,
 The smooth transparent skin,
 Refined, as with intent to show
 The holiness within ;
 The grace of parting Infancy
 By blushes yet untamed ;
 Age faithful to the mother's knee,
 Nor of her arms ashamed.

Two lovely Sisters, still and sweet
 As flowers, stand side by side ;
 Their soul-subduing looks might cheat
 The Christian of his pride :
 Such beauty hath the Eternal poured
 Upon them not forlorn,
 Though of a lineage once abhorred,
 Nor yet redeemed from scorn.

Mysterious safeguard, that, in spite
 Of poverty and wrong,
 Doth here preserve a living light,
 From Hebrew fountains sprung ;
 That gives this ragged group to cast
 Around the dell a gleam
 Of Palestine, of glory past,
 And proud Jerusalem !

(1828)

THE GLEANER

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE

THAT happy gleam of vernal eyes,
 Those locks from summer's golden skies,
 That o'er thy brow are shed ;

On the Power of Sound 493

That cheek—a kindling of the morn,
That lip—a rose-bud from the thorn,
I saw ; and Fancy sped
To scenes Arcadian, whispering, through soft air,
Of bliss that grows without a care,
And happiness that never flies—
(How can it where love never dies?)
Whispering of promise, where no blight
Can reach the innocent delight ;
Where pity, to the mind conveyed
In pleasure, is the darkest shade
That Time, unwrinkled grandsire, flings
From his smoothly gliding wings.
What mortal form, what earthly face
Inspired the pencil, lines to trace,
And mingle colours, that should breed
Such rapture, nor want power to feed ;
For had thy charge been idle flowers,
Fair Damsel ! o'er my captive mind,
To truth and sober reason blind,
'Mid that soft air, those long-lost bowers,
The sweet illusion might have hung, for hours.
Thanks to this tell-tale sheaf of corn,
That touchingly bespeaks thee born
Life's daily tasks with them to share
Who, whether from their lowly bed
They rise, or rest the weary head,
Ponder the blessing they entreat
From Heaven, and *feel* what they repeat,
While they give utterance to the prayer
That asks for daily bread.

(1828)

ON THE POWER OF SOUND¹

I

Thy functions are ethereal,
As if within thee dwelt a glancing mind,
Organ of vision ! And a Spirit ærial
Informs the cell of Hearing, dark and blind ;
Intricate labyrinth, more dread for thought
To enter than oracular cave ;

¹ The lines "Thou too be heard, lone eagle !" were suggested near the Giant's Causeway, or rather at the promontory of Fairhead, where a pair of eagles wheeled above our heads and dived off as if to hide themselves in a blaze of sky made by the setting sun.

Strict passage, through which sighs are brought,
And whispers for the heart, their slave ;
And shrieks, that revel in abuse
Of shivering flesh ; and warbled air,
Whose piercing sweetness can unloose
The chains of frenzy, or entice a smile
Into the ambush of despair ;
Hosannas pealing down the long-drawn aisle,
And requiems answered by the pulse that beats
Devoutly, in life's last retreats !

II

The headlong streams and fountains
Serve Thee, invisible Spirit, with untired powers ;
Cheering the wakeful tent on Syrian mountains,
They lull perchance ten thousand thousand flowers.
That roar, the prowling lion's *Here I am,*
How fearful to the desert wide !
That bleat, how tender ! of the dam
Calling a straggler to her side.
Shout, cuckoo !—let the vernal soul
Go with thee to the frozen zone ;
Toll from thy loftiest perch, lone bell-bird, toll !
At the still hour to Mercy dear,
Mercy from her twilight throne
Listening to nun's faint throb of holy fear,
To sailor's prayer breathed from a darkening sea,
Or widow's cottage-lullaby.

III

Ye Voices, and ye Shadows
And Images of voice—to hound and horn
From rocky steep and rock-bestudded meadows
Flung back, and, in the sky's blue caves, reborn—
On with your pastime ! till the church-tower bells
A greeting give of measured glee ;
And milder echoes from their cells
Repeat the bridal symphony.
Then, or far earlier, let us rove
Where mists are breaking up or gone,
And from aloft look down into a cove
Besprinkled with a careless quire,
Happy milk-maids, one by one
Scattering a ditty each to her desire,
A liquid concert matchless by nice Art,
A stream as if from one full heart.

IV

Blest be the song that brightens
 The blind man's gloom, exalts the veteran's mirth ;
 Unscorned the peasant's whistling breath, that lightens
 His duteous toil of furrowing the green earth.
 For the tired slave, Song lifts the languid oar,
 And bids it aptly fall, with chime
 That beautifies the fairest shore,
 And mitigates the harshest clime.
 Yon pilgrims see—in lagging file
 They move ; but soon the appointed way
 A choral *Ave Marie* shall beguile,
 And to their hope the distant shrine
 Glîsten with a livelier ray :
 Nor friendless he, the prisoner of the mine,
 Who from the well-spring of his own clear breast
 Can draw, and sing his griefs to rest.

V

When civic renovation
 Dawns on a kingdom, and for needful haste
 Best eloquence avails not, Inspiration
 Mounts with a tune, that travels like a blast
 Piping through cave and battlemented tower .
 Then starts the sluggard, pleased to meet
 That voice of Freedom, in its power
 Of promises, shrill, wild, and sweet !
 Who, from a martial *pageant*, spreads
 Incitements of a battle-day,
 Thrilling the unweaponed crowd with plumeless heads ?—
 Even She whose Lydian airs inspire
 Peaceful striving, gentle play
 Of timid hope and innocent desire
 Shot from the dancing Graces, as they move
 Fanned by the plausive wings of Love.

VI

How oft along thy mazes,
 Regent of sound, have dangerous Passions trod !
 O Thou, through whom the temple rings with praises,
 And blackening clouds in thunder speak of God,
 Betray not by the cozenage of sense
 Thy votaries, woefully resigned
 To a voluptuous influence

That taints the purer, better, mind ;
But lead sick Fancy to a harp
That hath in noble tasks been tried ;
And, if the virtuous feel a pang too sharp
Soothe it into patience,—stay
The uplifted arm of Suicide ;
And let some mood of thine in firm array
Knit every thought the impending issue needs,
Ere martyr burns, or patriot bleeds !

VII

As Conscience, to the centre
Of being, smites with irresistible pain
So shall a solemn cadence, if it enter
The mouldy vaults of the dull idiot's brain,
Transmute him to a wretch from quiet hurled—
Convulsed as by a jarring din ;
And then aghast, as at the world
Of reason partially let in
By concords winding with a sway
Terrible for sense and soul !
Or, awed he weeps, struggling to quell dismay.
Point not these mysteries to an Art
Lodged above the starry pole ;
Pure modulations flowing from the heart
Of divine Love, where Wisdom, Beauty, Truth
With Order dwell, in endless youth ?

VIII

Oblivion may not cover
All treasures hoarded by the miser, Time.
Orphean Insight ! truth's undaunted lover,
To the first leagues of tutored passion climb,
When Music deigned within this grosser sphere
Her subtle essence to enfold,
And voice and shell drew forth a tear
Softer than Nature's self could mould.
Yet *strenuous* was the infant Age :
Art, daring because souls could feel,
Stirred nowhere but an urgent equipage
Of rapt imagination sped her march
Through the realms of woe and weal :
Hell to the lyre bowed low ; the upper arch
Rejoiced that clamorous spell and magic verse
Her wan disasters could disperse.

On the Power of Sound 497

IX

The GIFT to king Amphion
That walled a city with its melody
Was for belief no dream :—thy skill, Arion !
Could humanise the creatures of the sea,
Where men were monsters. A last grace he craves,
Leave for one chant ;—the dulcet sound
Steals from the deck o'er willing waves,
And listening dolphins gather round.
Self-cast, as with a desperate course,
'Mid that strange audience, he bestrides
A proud One docile as a managed horse ;
And singing, while the accordant hand
Sweeps his harp, the Master rides ;
So shall he touch at length a friendly strand,
And he, with his preserver, shine star-bright
In memory, through silent night.

X

The pipe of Pan, to shepherds
Couched in the shadow of Mænalian pines,
Was passing sweet ; the eyeballs of the leopards,
That in high triumph drew the Lord of vines,
How did they sparkle to the cymbal's clang !
While Fauns and Satyrs beat the ground
In cadence,—and Silenus swang
This way and that, with wild-flowers crowned.
To life, to *life* give back thine ear :
Ye who are longing to be rid
Of fable, though to truth subservient, hear
The little sprinkling of cold earth that fell
Echoed from the coffin-lid ;
The convict's summons in the steeple's knell ;
"The vain distress-gun," from a leeward shore,
Repeated—heard, and heard no more !

XI

For terror, joy, or pity,
Vast is the compass and the swell of notes :
From the babe's first cry to voice of regal city,
Rolling a solemn sea-like bass, that floats
Far as the woodlands—with the trill to blend
Of that shy songstress, whose love-tale
Might tempt an angel to descend,
While hovering o'er the moonlight vale.
Ye wandering Utterances, has earth no scheme,

498 On the Power of Sound

No scale of moral music—to unite
 Powers that survive but in the faintest dream
 Of memory?—O that ye might stoop to bear
 Chains, such precious chains of sight
 As laboured minstrelsies through ages wear!
 O for a balance fit the truth to tell
 Of the Unsubstantial, pondered well!

XII

By one pervading spirit
 Of tones and numbers all things are controlled,
 As sages taught, where faith was found to merit
 Initiation in that mystery old.
 The heavens, whose aspect makes our minds as still
 As they themselves appear to be,
 Innumerable voices fill
 With everlasting harmony;
 The towering headlands, crowned with mist,
 Their feet among the billows, know
 That Ocean is a mighty harmonist;
 Thy pinions, universal Air,
 Ever waving to and fro,
 Are delegates of harmony, and bear
 Strains that support the Seasons in their round;
 Stern Winter loves a dirge-like sound.

XIII

Break forth into thanksgiving,
 Ye banded instruments of wind and chords
 Unite, to magnify the Ever-living,
 Your inarticulate notes with the voice of words!
 Nor hushed be service from the lowing mead,
 Nor mute the forest hum of noon;
 Thou too be heard, lone eagle! freed
 From snowy peak and cloud, attune
 Thy hungry barkings to the hymn
 Of joy, that from her utmost walls
 The six-days' Work, by flaming Seraphim
 Transmits to Heaven! As Deep to Deep
 Shouting through one valley calls,
 All worlds, all natures, mood and measure keep
 For praise and ceaseless gratulation, poured
 Into the ear of God, their Lord!

XIV

A Voice to Light gave Being;
 To Time, and Man, his earth-born chronicler;

A Voice shall finish doubt and dim foreseeing,
 And sweep away life's visionary stir;
 The trumpet (we, intoxicate with pride,
 Arm at its blast for deadly wars)
 To archangelic lips applied,
 The grave shall open, quench the stars.
 O Silence! are Man's noisy years
 No more than moments of thy life?
 Is Harmony, blest queen of smiles and tears,
 With her smooth tones and discords just,
 Tempered into rapturous strife,
 Thy destined bond-slave? No! though earth be dust
 And vanish, though the heavens dissolve, her stay
 Is in the WORD, that shall not pass away.

(1828)

INCIDENT AT BRUGÈS¹

IN Brugès town is many a street
 Whence busy life hath fled;
 Where, without hurry, noiseless feet
 The grass-grown pavement tread.
 There heard we, halting in the shade
 Flung from a Convent-tower,
 A harp that tuneful prelude made
 To a voice of thrilling power.
 The measure, simple truth to tell,
 Was fit for some gay throng;
 Though from the same grim turret fell
 The shadow and the song.
 When silent were both voice and chords,
 The strain seemed doubly dear,
 Yet sad as sweet,—for *English* words
 Had fallen upon the ear.
 It was a breezy hour of eve;
 And pinnacle and spire
 Quivered and seemed almost to heave,
 Clothed with innocuous fire;
 But, where we stood, the setting sun
 Showed little of his state;

¹ This occurred at Brugès in 1828. Mr. Coleridge, my Daughter, and I made a tour together in Flanders, upon the Rhine, and returned by Holland. Dora and I, while taking a walk along a retired part of the town, heard the voice as here described, and were afterwards informed it was a Convent in which were many English. We were both much touched, I might say affected, and Dora moved as appears in the verses.

500 Gold and Silver Fishes in a Vase

And, if the glory reached the Nun,
'Twas through an iron grate.
Not always is the heart unwise,
Nor pity idly born,
If even a passing Stranger sighs
For them who do not mourn.
Sad is thy doom, self-solaced dove,
Captive, whoe'er thou be !
Oh ! what is beauty, what is love,
And opening life to thee ?
Such feeling pressed upon my soul,
A feeling sanctified
By one soft trickling tear that stole
From the Maiden at my side ;
Less tribute could she pay than this,
Borne gaily o'er the sea,
Fresh from the beauty and the bliss
Of English liberty ?

(1828)

GOLD AND SILVER FISHES IN A VASE

THE soaring lark is blest as proud
When at heaven's gate she sings ;
The roving bee proclaims aloud
Her flight by vocal wings ;
While Ye, in lasting durance pent,
Your silent lives employ
For something more than dull content,
Though haply less than joy.
Yet might your glassy prison seem
A place where joy is known,
Where golden flash and silver gleam
Have meanings of their own ;
While, high and low, and all about,
Your motions, glittering Elves !
Ye weave—no danger from without,
And peace among yourselves.
Type of a sunny human breast
Is your transparent cell ;
Where Fear is but a transient guest,
No sullen Humours dwell ;
Where, sensitive of every ray
That smites this tiny sea,
Your scaly panoplies repay
The loan with usury.

How beautiful !—Yet none knows why
 This ever-graceful change,
 Renewed—renewed incessantly—
 Within your quiet range.
 Is it that ye with conscious skill
 For mutual pleasure glide;
 And sometimes, not without your will,
 Are dwarfed, or magnified?
 Fays, Genii of gigantic size!
 And now, in twilight dim,
 Clustering like constellated eyes,
 In wings of Cherubim,
 When the fierce orbs abate their glare;—
 Whate'er your forms express,
 Whate'er ye seem, whate'er ye are—
 All leads to gentleness.
 Cold though your nature be, 'tis pure;
 Your birthright is a fence
 From all that haughtier kinds endure
 Through tyranny of sense.
 Ah! not alone by colours bright
 Are Ye to heaven allied,
 When, like essential Forms of light,
 Ye mingle, or divide.
 For day-dreams soft as e'er beguiled
 Day-thoughts while limbs repose;
 For moonlight fascinations mild,
 Your gift, ere shutters close—
 Accept, mute Captives! thanks and praise;
 And may this tribute prove
 That gentle admirations raise
 Delight resembling love.

(1829)

LIBERTY

(SEQUEL TO THE ABOVE)

ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND; THE GOLD AND SILVER FISHES HAVING
 BEEN REMOVED TO A POOL IN THE PLEASURE-GROUND OF RYDAL
 MOUNT.

"The liberty of a people consists in being governed by laws which they have made for themselves, under whatever form it be of government. The liberty of a private man, in being master of his own time and actions, as far as may consist with the laws of God and of his country. Of this latter we are here to discourse."—COWLEY.

THOSE breathing Tokens of your kind regard,
 (Suspect not, Anna, that their fate is hard;

Not soon does aught to which mild fancies cling
 In lonely spots, become a slighted thing ;)
 Those silent Inmates now no longer share,
 Nor do they need, our hospitable care,
 Removed in kindness from their glassy Cell
 To the fresh waters of a living Well—
 An elfin pool so sheltered that its rest
 No winds disturb ; the mirror of whose breast
 Is smooth as clear, save where with dimples small
 A fly may settle, or a blossom fall
 —*There* swims, of blazing sun and beating shower
 Fearless (but how obscured!) the golden Power,
 That from his bauble prison used to cast
 Gleams by the richest jewel unsurpast ;
 And near him, darkling like a sullen Gnome,
 The silver Tenant of the crystal dome ;
 Dissevered both from all the mysteries
 Of hue and altering shape that charmed all eyes.
 Alas ! they pined, they languished while they shone ;
 And, if not so, what matters beauty gone
 And admiration lost, by change of place
 That brings to the inward creature no disgrace ?
 But if the change restore his birthright, then,
 Whate'er the difference, boundless is the gain.
 Who can divine what impulses from God
 Reach the caged lark, within a town-abode,
 From his poor inch or two of daisied sod ?
 O yield him back his privilege !—No sea
 Swells like the bosom of a man set free ;
 A wilderness is rich with liberty.
 Roll on, ye spouting whales, who die or keep
 Your independence in the fathomless Deep !
 Spread, tiny nautilus, the living sail ;
 Dive, at thy choice, or brave the freshening gale !
 If unproved the ambitious eagle mount
 Sunward to seek the daylight in its fount,
 Bays, gulfs, and ocean's Indian width, shall be,
 Till the world perishes, a field for thee !
 While musing here I sit in shadow cool,
 And watch these mute Companions, in the pool,
 (Among reflected boughs of leafy trees)
 By glimpses *at their ease*,
 Enlivened, *in their* *curies*,
 I ask what warrant fixed them (like a spell
 Of witchcraft fixed them) in the crystal cell ;

To wheel with languid motion round and round,
Beautiful, yet in mournful durance bound.
Their peace, perhaps, our lightest footfall marred ;
On their quick sense our sweetest music jarred ;
And whither could they dart, if seized with fear ?
No sheltering stone, no tangled root was near.
When fire or taper ceased to cheer the room,
They wore away the night in starless gloom ;
And, when the sun first dawned upon the streams,
How faint their portion of his vital beams !
Thus, and unable to complain, they fared,
While not one joy of ours by them was shared.

Is there a cherished bird (I venture now
To snatch a sprig from Chaucer's reverend brow)—
Is there a brilliant fondling of the cage,
Though sure of plaudits on his costly stage,
Though fed with dainties from the snow-white hand
Of a kind mistress, fairest of the land,
But gladly would escape ; and, if need were,
Scatter the colours from the plumes that bear
The emancipated captive through blithe air
Into strange woods, where he at large may live
On best or worst which they and Nature give ?
The beetle loves his unpretending track,
The snail the house he carries on his back ;
The far-fetched worm with pleasure would disown
The bed we give him, though of softest down ;
A noble instinct ; in all kinds the same,
All ranks ! What Sovereign, worthy of the name,
If doomed to breathe against his lawful will
An element that flatters him—to kill,
But would rejoice to barter outward show
For the least boon that freedom can bestow ?

But most the Bard is true to inborn right,
Lark of the dawn, and Philomel of night,
Exults in freedom, can with rapture vouch
For the dear blessings of a lowly couch,
A natural meal—days, months, from Nature's hand ;
Time, place, and business, all at his command !—
Who bends to happier duties, who more wise
Than the industrious Poet, taught to prize,
Above all grandeur, a pure life uncrossed
By cares in which simplicity is lost ?
That life—the flowery path that winds by stealth—
Which Horace needed for his spirit's health ;

Sighed for, in heart and genius, overcome
 By noise and strife, and questions wearisome,
 And the vain splendours of Imperial Rome?—
 Let easy mirth his social hours inspire,
 And fiction animate his sportive lyre,
 Attuned to verse that, crowning light Distress
 With garlands, cheats her into happiness ;
 Give *me* the humblest note of those sad strains
 Drawn forth by pressure of his gilded chains,
 As a chance-sunbeam from his memory fell
 Upon the Sabine farm he loved so well ;
 Or when the prattle of Blandusia's spring
 Haunted his ear—he only listening—
 He, proud to please, above all rivals, fit
 To win the palm of gaiety and wit ;
 He, doubt not, with involuntary dread,
 Shrinking from each new favour to be shed,
 By the world's Ruler, on his honoured head !

In a deep vision's intellectual scene,
 Such earnest longings and regrets as keen
 Depressed the melancholy Cowley, laid
 Under a fancied yew-tree's luckless shade ;
 A doleful bower for penitential song,
 Where Man and Muse complained of mutual wrong ;
 While Cam's ideal current glided by,
 And antique towers nodded their foreheads high,
 Citadels dear to studious privacy.
 But Fortune, who had long been used to sport
 With this tried Servant of a thankless Court,
 Relenting met his wishes ; and to you
 The remnant of his days at least was true ;
 You, whom, though long deserted, he loved best ;
 You, Muses, books, fields, liberty, and rest !

Far happier they who, fixing hope and aim
 On the humanities of peaceful fame,
 Enter betimes with more than martial fire
 The generous course, aspire, and still aspire ;
 Upheld by warnings heeded not too late
 Stifle the contradictions of their fate,
 And to one purpose cleave, their Being's godlike mate !

Thus, gifted Friend, but with the placid brow
 That woman ne'er should forfeit, keep *thy* vow ;
 With modest scorn reject whate'er would blind
 The ethereal eyesight, cramp the winged mind !
 Then, with a blessing granted from above

To every act, word, thought, and look of love,
 Life's book for Thee may lie unclosed, till age
 Shall with a thankful tear bedrop its latest page.

(1829)

HUMANITY¹

WHAT though the Accused, upon his own appeal
 To righteous Gods when man has ceased to feel,
 Or at a doubting Judge's stern command,
 Before the **STONE OF POWER** no longer stand—
 To take his sentence from the balanced Block,
 As, at his touch, it rocks, or seems to rock ;
 Though, in the depths of sunless groves, no more
 The Druid-priest the hallowed Oak adore ;
 Yet, for the Initiate, rocks and whispering trees
 Do still perform mysterious offices !
 And functions dwell in beast and bird that swar
 The reasoning mind, or with the fancy play,
 Inviting, at all seasons, ears and eyes
 To watch for undelusive auguries :—
 Not uninspired appear their simplest ways ;
 Their voices mount symbolical of praise—
 To mix with hymns that Spirits make and hear ;
 And to fallen man their innocence is dear.
 Enraptured Art draws from those sacred springs
 Streams that reflect the poetry of things !
 Where christian Martyrs stand in hues portrayed,
 That, might a wish avail, would never fade ;
 Borne in their hands the lily and the palm
 Shed round the altar a celestial calm ;
 There, too, behold the lamb and guileless dove
 Prest in the tenderness of virgin love
 To saintly bosoms !—Glorious is the blending
 Of right affections climbing or descending
 Along a scale of light and life, with cares
 Alternate ; carrying holy thoughts and prayers
 Up to the sovereign seat of the Most High ;
 Descending to the worm in charity ;
 Like those good Angels whom a dream of night
 Gave, in the field of Luz, to Jacob's sight,

¹ These verses and those entitled "Liberty" were composed as one piece, which Mrs. Wordsworth complained of as unwieldy and ill-portioned ; and accordingly it was divided into two on her judicious recommendation. The Rocking-stones, alluded to in the beginning of the following verses, are supposed to have been used, by our British ancestors, both for judicial and religious purposes. Such stones are not uncommonly found, at this day, both in Great Britain and in Ireland.

All, while *he* slept, treading the pendent stairs
 Earthward or heavenward, radiant messengers,
 That, with a perfect will in one accord
 Of strict obedience, serve the Almighty Lord ;
 And with untired humility forebore
 To speed their errand by the wings they wore.
 What a fair world were ours for verse to paint,
 If Power could live at ease with self-restraint !
 Opinion bow before the naked sense
 Of the great Vision,—faith in Providence ;
 Merciful over all his creatures, just
 To the least particle of sentient dust :
 But, fixing by immutable decrees,
 Seedtime and harvest for his purposes !
 Then would be closed the restless oblique eye
 That looks for evil like a treacherous spy ;
 Disputes would then relax, like stormy winds
 That into breezes sink ; impetuous minds
 By discipline endeavour to grow meek
 As Truth herself, whom they profess to seek.
 Then Genius, shunning fellowship with Pride,
 Would braid his golden locks at Wisdom's side ,
 Love ebb and flow untroubled by caprice ;
 And not alone *harsh* tyranny would cease,
 But unoffending creatures find release
 From qualified oppression, whose defence
 Rests on a hollow plea of recompence ;
 Thought-tempered wrongs, for each humane respect
 Oft worse to bear, or deadlier in effect.
 Witness those glances of indignant scorn
 From some high-minded Slave, impelled to spurn
 The kindness that would make him less forlorn ;
 Or, if the soul to bondage be subdued,
 His look of pitiable gratitude !

Alas for thee, bright Galaxy of Isles,
 Whose day departs in pomp, returns with smiles—
 To greet the flowers and fruitage of a land,
 As the sun mounts, by sea-born breezes fanned ;
 A land whose azure mountain-tops are seats
 For Gods in council, whose green vales, retreats
 Fit for the shades of heroes, mingling there
 To breathe Elysian peace in upper air.

Though cold as winter, gloomy as the grave,
 Stone-walls a prisoner make, but not a slave.
 Shall man assume a property in man ?

‘This Lawn, a Carpet all Alive’ 507

Lay on the moral will a withering ban?
Shame that our laws at distance still protect
Enormities, which they at home reject!
“Slaves cannot breathe in England”—yet that boast
Is but a mockery! when from coast to coast,
Though *fettered* slave be none, her floors and soil
Groan underneath a weight of slavish toil,
For the poor Many, measured out by rules
Fetched with cupidity from heartless schools,
That to an Idol, falsely called “the Wealth
Of Nations,” sacrifice a People’s health,
Body and mind and soul; a thirst so keen
Is ever urging on the vast machine
Of sleepless Labour, ’mid whose dizzy wheels
The Power least prized is that which thinks and feels.

Then, for the pastimes of this delicate age,
And all the heavy or light vassalage
Which for their sakes we fasten, as may suit
Our varying moods, on human kind or brute,
’Twere well in little, as in great, to pause,
Lest Fancy trifle with eternal laws.
Not from his fellows only man may learn
Rights to compare and duties to discern!
All creatures and all objects, in degree,
Are friends and patrons of humanity.
There are to whom the garden, grove, and field,
Perpetual lessons of forbearance yield;
Who would not lightly violate the grace
The lowliest flower possesses in its place;
Nor shorten the sweet life, too fugitive,
Which nothing less than Infinite Power could give.

(1829)

“THIS LAWN, A CARPET ALL ALIVE”

THIS Lawn, a carpet all alive
With shadows flung from leaves—to strive
In dance, amid a press
Of sunshine, an apt emblem yields
Of Worldlings revelling in the fields
Of strenuous idleness;

Less quick the stir when tide and breeze
Encounter, and to narrow seas
Forbid a moment’s rest;

508 Thought on the Seasons

The medley less when boreal Lights
Glance to and fro, like aery Sprites
To feats of arms address !

Yet, spite of all this eager strife,
This ceaseless play, the genuine life
That serves the stedfast hours,
Is in the grass beneath, that grows
Unheeded, and the mute repose
Of sweetly-breathing flowers.

(1829)

THOUGHT ON THE SEASONS

FLATTERED with promise of escape
From every hurtful blast,
Spring takes, O sprightly May ! thy shape,
Her loveliest and her last.

Less fair is summer riding high
In fierce solstitial power,
Less fair than when a lenient sky
Brings on her parting hour.

When earth repays with golden sheaves
The labours of the plough,
And ripening fruits and forest leaves
All brighten on the bough ;

What pensive beauty autumn shows,
Before she hears the sound
Of winter rushing in, to close
The emblematic round !

Such be our Spring, our Summer such
So may our Autumn blend
With hoary Winter, and Life touch,
Through heaven-born hope, her end !

(1829)

A GRAVESTONE UPON THE FLOOR IN THE CLOISTERS OF WORCESTER CATHEDRAL ¹

" MISERRIMUS," and neither name nor date,
Prayer, text, or symbol, graven upon the stone

¹ " Miserrimus." Many conjectures have been formed as to the person who lies under this stone. Nothing appears to be known for a certainty. Query—The Rev. Mr. Morris, a nonconformist, a sufferer for conscience-sake ; a worthy man who, having been deprived of his benefice after the accession of William III., lived to an old age in extreme destitution, on the alms of charitable Jacobites.

Nought but that word assigned to the unknown,
 That solitary word—to separate
 From all, and cast a cloud around the fate
 Of him who lies beneath. Most wretched one,
Who chose his epitaph?—Himself alone
 Could thus have dared the grave to agitate,
 And claim, among the dead, this awful crown;
 Nor doubt that He marked also for his own
 Close to these cloistral steps a burial-place,
 That every foot might fall with heavier tread,
 Trampling upon his vileness. Stranger, pass
 Softly!—To save the contrite, Jesus bled.

(1829)

A TRADITION OF OKER HILL IN DARLEY
 DALE, DERBYSHIRE ¹

'Tis said that to the brow of yon fair hill
 Two Brothers clomb, and, turning face from face,
 Nor one look more exchanging, grief to still
 Or feed, each planted on that lofty place
 A chosen Tree; then, eager to fulfil
 Their courses, like two new-born rivers, they
 In opposite directions urged their way
 Down from the far-seen mount. No blast might kill
 Or blight that fond memorial;—the trees grew,
 And now entwine their arms; but ne'er again
 Embraced those Brothers upon earth's wide plain;
 Nor aught of mutual joy or sorrow knew
 Until their spirits mingled in the sea
 That to itself takes all, Eternity.

(1829)

THE ARMENIAN LADY'S LOVE ²

I

You have heard "a Spanish Lady
 How she wooed an English man;" ³

¹ This pleasing tradition was told me by the coachman at whose side I sat while he drove down the dale, he pointing to the trees on the hill as he related the story.

² The subject of the following poem is from the *Orlando* of the author's friend, Kenelm Henry Digby: and the liberty is taken of inscribing it to him as an acknowledgment, however unworthy, of pleasure and instruction derived from his numerous and valuable writings, illustrative of the piety and chivalry of the olden time.

³ See, in Percy's *Reliques*, that fine old ballad, "The Spanish Lady's Love;" from which Poem the form of stanza, as suitable to dialogue, is adopted.

510 The Armenian Lady's Love

Hear now of a fair Armenian,
Daughter of the proud Soldan ;
How she loved a Christian slave, and told her pain
By word, look, deed, with hope that he might love again.

II

"Pluck that rose, it moves my liking,"
Said she, lifting up her veil ;
"Pluck it for me, gentle gardener,
Ere it wither and grow pale."
"Princess fair, I till the ground, but may not take
From twig or bed an humbler flower, even for your sake!"

III

"Grieved am I, submissive Christian !
To behold thy captive state ;
Women, in your land, may pity
(May they not?) the unfortunate."
"Yes, kind Lady ! otherwise man could not bear
Life, which to every one that breathes is full of care."

IV

"Worse than idle is compassion
If it end in tears and sighs ;
Thee from bondage would I rescue
And from vile indignities ;
Nurtured, as thy mien bespeaks, in high degree,
Look up—and help a hand that longs to set thee free."

V

"Lady ! dread the wish, nor venture
In such peril to engage ;
Think how it would stir against you
Your most loving father's rage :
Sad deliverance would it be, and yoked with shame,
Should troubles overflow on her from whom it came."

VI

"Generous Frank ! the just in effort
Are of inward peace secure :
Hardships for the brave encountered,
Even the feeblest may endure :
If almighty grace through me thy chains unbind
My father for slave's work may seek a slave in mind."

VII

"Princess, at this burst of goodness,
My long-frozen heart grows warm !"

The Armenian Lady's Love 511

"Yet you make all courage fruitless,
Me to save from chance of harm :
Leading such companion I that gilded dome,
Yon minarets, would gladly leave for his worst home."

VIII

"Feeling tunes your voice, fair Princess,
And your brow is free from scorn,
Else these words would come like mockery,
Sharper than the pointed thorn."
"Whence the undeserved mistrust? Too wide apart
Our faith hath been,—O would that eyes could see the
heart !"

IX

"Tempt me not, I pray ; my doom is
These base implements to wield ;
Rusty lance, I ne'er shall grasp thee,
Ne'er assoil my cobwebbed shield !
Never see my native land, nor castle towers,
Nor Her who thinking of me there counts widowed hours."

X

"Prisoner ! pardon youthful fancies ;
Wedded ? If you *can*, say no !
Blessèd is and be your consort ;
Hopes I cherished—let them go !
Handmaid's privilege would leave my purpose free,
Without another link to my felicity."

XI

"Wedded love with loyal Christians,
Lady, is a mystery rare ;
Body, heart, and soul in union,
Make one being of a pair."
"Humble love in me would look for no return,
Soft as a guiding star that cheers, but cannot burn."

XII

"Gracious Allah ! by such title
Do I dare to thank the God,
Him who thus exalts thy spirit,
Flower of an unchristian sod !
Or hast thou put off wings which thou in heaven dost wear ?
What have I seen, and heard, or dreamt ? where am I ?
where ?"

512 The Armenian Lady's Love

XIII

Here broke off the dangerous converse :
 Less impassioned words might tell
 How the pair escaped together,
 Tears not wanting, nor a knell
 Of sorrow in her heart while through her father's door,
 And from her narrow world, she passed for evermore.

XIV

But affections higher, holier,
 Urged her steps ; she shrunk from trust
 In a sensual creed that trampled
 Woman's birthright into dust.
 Little be the wonder then, the blame be none,
 If she, a timid Maid, hath put such boldness on.

XV

Judge both Fugitives with knowledge :
 In those old romantic days
 Mighty were the soul's commandments
 To support, restrain, or raise.
 Foes might hang upon their path, snakes rustle near,
 But nothing from their inward selves had they to fear.

XVI

Thought infirm ne'er came between them,
 Whether printing desert sands
 With accordant steps, or gathering
 Forest-fruit with social hands ;
 Or whispering like two reeds that in the cold moonbeam
 Bend with the breeze their heads, beside a crystal stream.

XVII

On a friendly deck reposing
 They at length for Venice steer ;
 There, when they had closed their voyage
 One, who daily on the pier
 Watched for tidings from the East, beheld his Lord,
 Fell down and clasped his knees for joy, not uttering word.

XVIII

Mutual was the sudden transport ;
 Breathless questions followed fast,
 Years contracting to a moment,
 Each word greedier than the last :
 " Hie thee to the Countess, friend ! return with speed,
 And of this Stranger speak by whom her lord was freed.

The Armenian Lady's Love 513

XIX

Say that I, who might have languished,
Drooped and pined till life was spent,
Now before the gates of Stolberg
My Deliverer would present
For a crowning recompence, the precious grace
Of her who in my heart still holds her ancient place.

XX

Make it known that my Companion
Is of royal eastern blood,
Thirsting after all perfection,
Innocent, and meek, and good,
Though with misbelievers bred ; but that dark night
Will holy Church disperse by means of gospel-light.'

XXI

Swiftly went that grey-haired Servant,
Soon returned a trusty Page
Charged with greetings, benedictions,
Thanks and praises, each a gage
For a sunny thought to cheer the Stranger's way,
Her virtuous scruples to remove, her fears allay.

XXII

And how blest the Reunited,
While beneath their castle-walls,
Runs a deafening noise of welcome !—
Blest, though every tear that falls
Doth in its silence of past sorrow tell,
And makes a meeting seem most like a dear farewell.

XXIII

Through a haze of human nature,
Glorified by heavenly light,
Looked the beautiful Deliverer
On that overpowering sight,
While across her virgin cheek pure blushes strayed,
For every tender sacrifice her heart had made.

XXIV

On the ground the weeping Countess
Knelt, and kissed the Stranger's hand ;
Act of soul-devoted homage,
Pledge of an eternal band :
Nor did aught of future days that kiss belie,
Which, with a generous shout, the crowd did ratify.

514 The Poet and Caged Turtledove

xxv

Constant to the fair Armenian,
Gentle pleasures round her moved,
Like a tutelary spirit
Reverenced, like a sister, loved,
Christian meekness smoothed for all the path of life,
Who, loving most, should wiseliest love, their only strife.

xxvi

Mute memento of that union
In a Saxon church survives,
Where a cross-legged Knight lies sculptured
As between two wedded wives—
Figures with armorial signs of race and birth,
And the vain rank the pilgrims bore while yet on earth.
(1830)

THE POET AND THE CAGED TURTLEDOVE

As often as I murmur here
My half-formed melodies,
Straight from her osier mansion near,
The Turtledove replies :
Though silent as a leaf before,
The captive promptly coos ;
Is it to teach her own soft lore,
Or second my weak Muse ?

I rather think, the gentle Dove
Is murmuring a reproof,
Displeased that I from lays of love
Have dared to keep aloof ;
That I, a Bard of hill and dale,
Have carolled, fancy free,
As if nor dove nor nightingale,
Had heart or voice for me.

If such thy meaning, O forbear,
Sweet Bird ! to do me wrong ;
Love, blessèd Love, is everywhere
The spirit of my song :
'Mid grove, and by the calm fireside,
Love animates my lyre—
That coo again !—'tis not to chide,
I feel, but to inspire.

(1830)

PRESENTIMENTS

PRESENTIMENTS! they judge not right
Who deem that ye from open light

Retire in fear of shame;

All *heaven-born* Instincts shun the touch
Of vulgar sense,—and, being such,

Such privilege ye claim.

The tear whose source I could not guess,
The deep sigh that seemed fatherless,

Were mine in early days;

And now, unforced by time to part
With fancy, I obey my heart,

And venture on your praise.

What though some busy foes to good,
Too potent over nerve and blood,

Lurk near you—and combine

To taint the health which ye infuse;
This hides not from the moral Muse

Your origin divine.

How oft from you, derided Powers!
Comes Faith that in auspicious hours

Builds castles, not of air:

Bodings unsanctioned by the will
Flow from your visionary skill,

And teach us to beware.

The bosom-weight, your stubborn gift,
That no philosophy can lift,

Shall vanish, if ye please,

Like morning mist: and, where it lay,
The spirits at your bidding play

In gaiety and ease.

Star-guided contemplations move
Through space, though calm, not raised above

Prognostics that ye rule;

The naked Indian of the wild,

And haply, too, the cradled Child,

Are pupils of your school.

But who can fathom your intents,
Number their signs or instruments?

A rainbow, a sunbeam,

A subtle smell that Spring unbinds,

Dead pause abrupt of midnight winds,
An echo, or a dream.

The laughter of the Christmas hearth
 With sighs of self-exhausted mirth

Ye feelingly reprove ;
 And daily, in the conscious breast,
 Your visitations are a test
 And exercise of love.

When some great change gives boundless scope
 To an exulting Nation's hope,
 Oft, startled and made wise
 By your low-breathed interpretations,
 The simply-meek foretaste the springs
 Of bitter contraries.

Ye daunt the proud array of war,
 Pervade the lonely ocean far
 As sail hath been unfurled ;
 For dancers in the festive hall
 What ghastly partners hath your call
 Fetched from the shadowy world.

'Tis said, that warnings ye dispense,
 Emboldened by a keener sense ;
 That men have lived for whom,
 With dread precision, ye made clear
 The hour that in a distant year
 Should knell them to the tomb.

Unwelcome insight ! Yet there are,
 Blest times when mystery is laid bare,
 Truth shows a glorious face,
 While on that isthmus which commands
 The councils of both worlds, she stands,
 Sage Spirits ! by your grace.

God, who instructs the brutes to scent
 All changes of the element,
 Whose wisdom fixed the scale
 Of natures, for our wants provides
 By higher, sometimes humbler, guides,
 When lights of reason fail.

(1830)

"IN THESE FAIR VALES HATH MANY
 A TREE"¹

IN these fair vales hath many a Tree
 At Wordsworth's suit been spared ;

¹ Engraven, during my absence in Italy, upon a brass plate inserted in the Stone.

And from the builder's hand this Stone,
For some rude beauty of its own,
Was rescued by the Bard :
So let it rest ; and time will come
When here the tender-hearted
May heave a gentle sigh for him,
As one of the departed.

(1830)

ELEGIAC MUSINGS ¹

IN THE GROUNDS OF COLEORTON HALL, THE SEAT OF THE
LATE SIR G. H. BEAUMONT, BART.

WITH copious eulogy in prose or rhyme
Graven on the tomb we struggle against Time,
Alas, how feebly ! but our feelings rise
And still we struggle when a good man dies :
Such offering BEAUMONT dreaded and forbade,
A spirit meek in self-abasement clad.
Yet *here* at least—though few have numbered days
That shunned so modestly the light of praise—
His graceful manners, and the temperate ray
Of that arch fancy which would round him play,
Brightening a converse never known to swerve
From courtesy and delicate reserve ;
That sense, the bland philosophy of life,
Which checked discussion ere it warmed to strife—
Those rare accomplishments, and varied powers,
Might have their record among sylvan bowers.
Oh, fled for ever ! vanished like a blast
That shook the leaves in myriads as it passed ;—
Gone from this world of earth, air, sea, and sky,
From all its spirit-moving imagery,
Intensely studied with a painter's eye,
A poet's heart ; and, for congenial view,
Portrayed with happiest pencil, not untrue
To common recognitions while the line
Flowed in a course of sympathy divine,—
Oh ! severed, too abruptly, from delights
That all the seasons shared with equal rights ;—
Rapt in the grace of undismantled age,
From soul-felt music, and the treasured page

¹ In these grounds stands the Parish Church, wherein is a mural monument bearing an Inscription which, in deference to the earnest request of the deceased, is confined to name, dates, and these words :—
"Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O LORD !"

Lit by that evening lamp which loved to shed
 Its mellow lustre round thy honoured head ;
 While Friends beheld thee give with eye, voice, mien,
 More than theatric force to Shakspeare's scene ;—
 If thou hast heard me—if thy Spirit know
 Aught of these bowers and whence their pleasures flow ;
 If things in our remembrance held so dear,
 And thoughts and projects fondly cherished here,
 To thy exalted nature only seem
 Time's vanities, light fragments of earth's dream—
 Rebuke us not !—The mandate is obeyed
 That said, " Let praise be mute where I am laid ;"
 The holier deprecation, given in trust
 To the cold marble, waits upon thy dust ;
 Yet have we found how slowly genuine grief
 From *silent* admiration wins relief.
 Too long abashed thy Name is like a rose
 That doth " within itself its sweetness close ;"
 A drooping daisy changed into a cup
 In which her bright-eyed beauty is shut up.
 Within these groves, where still are flitting by
 Shades of the Past, oft noticed with a sigh,
 Shall stand a votive Tablet, haply free,
 When towers and temples fall, to speak of Thee !
 If sculptured emblems of our mortal doom
 Recall not there the wisdom of the Tomb,
 Green ivy risen from out the cheerful earth,
 Will fringe the lettered stone ; and herbs spring forth,
 Whose fragrance, by soft dews and rain unbound,
 Shall penetrate the heart without a wound ;
 While truth and love their purposes fulfil,
 Commemorating genius, talent, skill,
 That could not lie concealed where Thou wert known ;
 Thy virtues *He* must judge, and *He* alone,
 The God upon whose mercy they are thrown.
 (Nov. 1830)

"CHATSWORTH ! THY STATELY MANSION"

CHATSWORTH ! thy stately mansion, and the pride
 Of thy domain, strange contrast do present
 To house and home in many a craggy rent
 Of the wild Peak ; where new-born waters glide
 Through fields whose thrifty occupants abide
 As in a dear and chosen banishment,
 With every semblance of entire content ;

To the Author's Portrait 519

So kind is simple Nature, fairly tried !
Yet He whose heart in childhood gave her troth
To pastoral dales, thin-set with modest farms,
May learn, if judgment strengthen with his growth,
That, not for Fancy only, pomp hath charms ;
And, strenuous to protect from lawless harms
The extremes of favoured life, may honour both.
(1830)

TO THE AUTHOR'S PORTRAIT¹

Go, faithful Portrait ! and where long hath knelt
Margaret, the Saintly Foundress, take thy place ;
And, if Time spare the colours for the grace
Which to the work surpassing skill hath dealt,
Thou, on thy rock reclined, though kingdoms melt
And states be torn up by the roots, wilt seem
To breathe in rural peace, to hear the stream,
And think and feel as once the Poet felt.
Whate'er thy fate, those features have not grown
Unrecognised through many a household tear
More prompt, more glad, to fall than drops of dew
By morning shed around a flower half-blown ;
Tears of delight, that testified how true
To life thou art, and, in thy truth, how dear !
(1830)

THE PRIMROSE OF THE ROCK²

A Rock there is whose homely front
The passing traveller slights ;
Yet there the glow-worms hang their lamps,
Like stars, at various heights :
And one coy Primrose to that Rock
The vernal breeze invites.
What hideous warfare hath been waged,
What kingdoms overthrown,
Since first I spied that Primrose-tuft
And marked it for my own ;
A lasting link in Nature's chain
From highest heaven let down !

¹ Painted at Rydal Mount, by W. Pickersgill, Esq., for St. John's College, Cambridge.

² Written at Rydal Mount. The Rock stands on the right hand a little way leading up the middle road from Rydal to Grasmere. We have been in the habit of calling it the glow-worm rock from the number of glow-worms we have often seen hanging on it as described. The tuft of primrose has, I fear, been washed away by the heavy rains.

520 The Primrose of the Rock

The flowers, still faithful to the stems,
 Their fellowship renew ;
 The stems are faithful to the root,
 That worketh out of view ;
 And to the rock the root adheres
 In every fibre true.

Close clings to earth the living rock,
 Though threatening still to fall ;
 The earth is constant to her sphere ;
 And God upholds them all :
 So blooms this lonely Plant, nor dreads
 Her annual funeral.

* * *

Here closed the meditative strain ;
 But air breathed soft that day,
 The hoary mountain-heights were cheered,
 The sunny vale looked gay ;
 And to the Primrose of the Rock
 I gave this after-lay.

I sang—Let myriads of bright flowers,
 Like Thee, in field and grove
 Revive unenvied ;—mightier far,
 Than tremblings that reprove
 Our vernal tendencies to hope,
 Is God's redeeming love ;
 That love which changed—for wan disease,
 For sorrow that had bent
 O'er hopeless dust, for withered age—
 Their moral element,
 And turned the thistles of a curse
 To types beneficent.

Sin-blighted though we are, we too,
 The reasoning Sons of Men,
 From one oblivious winter called
 Shall rise, and breathe again ;
 And in eternal summer lose
 Our threescore years and ten.

To humbleness of heart descends
 This prescience from on high,
 The faith that elevates the just,
 Before and when they die ;
 And makes each soul a separate heaven,
 A court for Deity.

YARROW REVISITED, AND OTHER POEMS

COMPOSED (TWO EXCEPTED) DURING A TOUR IN SCOTLAND
AND ON THE ENGLISH BORDER, IN THE AUTUMN OF
1831¹

TO

SAMUEL ROGERS, Esq.,

AS A TESTIMONY OF FRIENDSHIP, AND
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

OF INTELLECTUAL OBLIGATIONS,
THESE MEMORIALS ARE AFFECTIONATELY
INSCRIBED

RYDAL MOUNT, *Dec. 11, 1834.*

I

YARROW REVISITED²

THE gallant Youth, who may have gained
Or seeks, a "winsome Marrow,"

Was but an Infant in the lap

When first I looked on Yarrow ;

Once more, by Newark's Castle-gate

Long left without a warder,

I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,

Great Minstrel of the Border !

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet day,

Their dignity installing

In gentle bosoms, while sere leaves

Were on the bough, or falling ;

But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed—

The forest to embolden ;

Reddened the fiery hues, and shot

Transparence through the golden.

For busy thoughts the Stream flowed on

In foamy agitation ;

¹ In the autumn of 1831, my daughter and I set off from Rydal to visit Sir Walter Scott before his departure for Italy. . . . How sadly changed did I find him from the man I had seen so healthy, gay, and hopeful, a few years before, when he said at the inn at Paterdale, in my presence, his daughter Anne also being there, with Mr. Lockhart, my own wife and daughter, and Mr. Quillinan,—“ I mean to live till I am *eighty*, and shall write as long as I live.”

² The following Stanzas are a memorial of a day passed with Sir Walter Scott and other Friends visiting the Banks of the Yarrow under his guidance, immediately before his departure from Abbotsford, for Naples.

522 Yarrow Revisited, and other Poems

And slept in many a crystal pool
 For quiet contemplation :
 No public and no private care
 The freeborn mind enthralling,
 We made a day of happy hours,
 Our happy days recalling.

Brisk Youth appeared, the Morn of youth,
 With freaks of graceful folly,—
 Life's temperate Noon, her sober Eve,
 Her Night not melancholy ;
 Past, present, future, all appeared
 In harmony united,
 Like guests that meet, and some from far,
 By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
 And down the meadow ranging,
 Did meet us with unaltered face,
 Though we were changed and changing ;
 If, *then*, some natural shadows spread
 Our inward prospect over,
 The soul's deep valley was not slow
 Its brightness to recover.

Eternal blessings on the Muse,
 And her divine employment !
 The blameless Muse, who trains her Sons
 For hope and calm enjoyment ;
 Albeit sickness, lingering yet,
 Has o'er their pillow brooded ;
 And Care waylays their steps—a Sprite
 Not easily eluded.

For thee, O SCOTT ! compelled to change
 Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot
 For warm Vesuvio's pine-clad slopes ;
 And leave thy Tweed and Tiviot
 For mild Sorento's breezy waves ;
 May classic Fancy, linking
 With native Fancy her fresh aid,
 Preserve thy heart from sinking !

Oh ! while they minister to thee,
 Each vying with the other,
 May Health return to mellow Age
 With Strength, her venturous brother ;

Yarrow Revisited, and other Poems 523

And Tiber, and each brook and rill
Renowned in song and story,
With unimagined beauty shine,
Nor lose one ray of glory!

For Thou, upon a hundred streams,
By tales of love and sorrow,
Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
Hast shed the power of Yarrow;
And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
Wherever they invite Thee,
At parent Nature's grateful call,
With gladness must requite Thee.

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
Such looks of love and honour
As thy own Yarrow gave to me
When first I gazed upon her;
Beheld what I had feared to see,
Unwilling to surrender
Dreams treasured up from early days,
The holy and the tender.

And what, for this frail world, were all
That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
Memorial tribute offer?
Yea, what were mighty Nature's self?
Her features, could they win us,
Unhelped by the poetic voice
That hourly speaks within us?

Nor deem that localised Romance
Plays false with our affections;
Unsanctifies our tears—made sport
For fanciful dejections:
Ah, no! the visions of the past
Sustain the heart in feeling
Life as she is—our changeful Life,
With friends and kindred dealing.

Bear witness, Ye, whose thoughts that day
In Yarrow's groves were centred;
Who through the silent portal arch
Of mouldering Newark entered;
And clomb the winding stair that once
Too timidly was mounted

524 Yarrow Revisited, and other Poems

By the "last Minstrel," (not the last !)
Ere he his Tale recounted.

Flow on for ever, Yarrow Stream !
Fulfil thy pensive duty,
Well pleased that future Bards should chant
For simple hearts thy beauty ;
To dream-light dear while yet unseen,
Dear to the common sunshine,
And dearer still, as now I feel,
To memory's shadowy moonshine !

II

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT FROM
ABBOTSFORD, FOR NAPLES

A TROUBLE, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height :
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
For kindred Power departing from their sight ;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.
Lift up your hearts, ye Mourners ! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes ;
Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows
Follow this wondrous Potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
Wafting your Charge to soft Parthenope !

III

A PLACE OF BURIAL IN THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND¹

PART fenced by man, part by a rugged steep
That curbs a foaming brook, a Grave-yard lies ;
The hare's best couching-place for fearless sleep ;
Which moonlit elves, far seen by credulous eyes,
Enter in dance. Of church, or sabbath ties,
No vestige now remains ; yet thither creep
Bereft Ones, and in lowly anguish weep
Their prayers out to the wind and naked skies.
Proud tomb is none ; but rudely-sculptured knights,
By humble choice of plain old times, are seen

¹ Similar places for burial are not unfrequent in Scotland. The one that suggested this Sonnet lies on the banks of a small stream called the Wauchope that flows into the Esk near Langholme.

Yarrow Revisited, and other Poems 525

Level with earth, among the hillocks green :
Union not sad, when sunny daybreak smites
The spangled turf, and neighbouring thickets ring
With *jubilate* from the choirs of spring !

IV

ON THE SIGHT OF A MANSE IN THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

SAY, ye far-travelled clouds, far-seeing hills—
Among the happiest-looking homes of men
Scattered all Britain over, through deep glen,
On airy upland, and by forest rills,
And o'er wide plains cheered by the lark that trills
His sky-born warblings—does aught meet your ken
More fit to animate the Poet's pen,
Aught that more surely by its aspect fills
Pure minds with sinless envy, than the Abode
Of the good Priest : who, faithful through all hours
To his high charge, and truly serving God,
Has yet a heart and hand for trees and flowers,
Enjoys the walks his predecessors trod,
Nor covets lineal rights in lands and towers.

COMPOSED IN ROSLIN CHAPEL DURING A STORM¹

THE wind is now thy organist ;—a clank
(We know not whence) ministers for a bell
To mark some change of service. As the swell
Of music reached its height, and even when sank
The notes, in prelude, ROSLIN ! to a blank
Of silence, how it thrilled thy sumptuous roof,
Pillars, and arches,—not in vain time-proof,
Though Christian rites be wanting ! From what bank
Came those live herbs ? by what hand were they sown
Where dew falls not, where rain-drops seem unknown ?
Yet in the Temple they a friendly niche
Share with their sculptured fellows, that, green-grown,
Copy their beauty more and more, and preach,
Though mute, of all things blending into one.

¹ We were detained by incessant rain and storm at the small inn near Roslin Chapel, and I passed a great part of the day pacing to and fro in this beautiful structure, which, though not used for public service, is not allowed to go to ruin. Here this Sonnet was composed.

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VI

THE TROSACHS

THERE'S not a nook within this solemn Pass,
But were an apt confessional for One
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That Life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy quest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest !

VII

THE PIBROCH'S NOTE

THE pibroch's note, discountenanced or mute ;
The Roman kilt, degraded to a toy
Of quaint apparel for a half-spoilt boy ;
The target mouldering like ungathered fruit ;
The smoking steam-boat eager in pursuit,
As eagerly pursued ; the umbrella spread
To weather-fend the Celtic herdsman's head—
All speak of manners withering to the root,
And of old honours, too, and passions high :
Then may we ask, though pleased that thought should
range
Among the conquests of civility,
Survives imagination—to the change
Superior ? Help to virtue does she give ?
If not, O Mortals, better cease to live !

VIII

COMPOSED IN THE GLEN OF LOCH ETIVE¹

"THIS Land of Rainbows spanning glens whose walls,
Rock-built, are hung with rainbow-coloured mists—
Of far-stretched Meres whose salt flood never rests—
Of tuneful Caves and playful Waterfalls—

"That make the Patriot-spirit." It was mortifying to have frequent occasions to observe the bitter hatred of the lower orders of the Highlanders to their superiors ; love of country seemed to have passed into its opposite. Emigration was the only relief looked to with hope.

Yarrow Revisited, and other Poems 527

Of Mountains varying momentarily their crests—
Proud be this Land! whose poorest huts are halls
Where Fancy entertains becoming guests;
While native song the heroic Past recalls.”
Thus, in the net of her own wishes caught,
The Muse exclaimed; but Story now must hide
Her trophies, Fancy crouch; the course of pride
Has been diverted, other lessons taught,
That make the Patriot-spirit bow her head
Where the all-conquering Roman feared to tread.

IX

EAGLES

COMPOSED AT DUNOLLIE CASTLE IN THE BAY OF OBAN

DISHONOUR'D Rock and Ruin! that, by law
Tyrannic, keep the Bird of Jove embarr'd
Like a lone criminal whose life is spar'd.
Vexed is he, and screams loud. The last I saw
Was on the wing; stooping, he struck with awe
Man, bird, and beast; then, with a consort paired,
From a bold headland, their loved aery's guard,
Flew high above Atlantic waves, to draw
Light from the fountain of the setting sun.
Such was this Prisoner once; and, when his plumes
The sea-blast ruffles as the storm comes on,
Then, for a moment, he, in spirit, resumes
His rank 'mong freeborn creatures that live free,
His power, his beauty, and his majesty.

X

IN THE SOUND OF MULL

TRADITION, be thou mute! Oblivion, throw
Thy veil in mercy o'er the records, hung
Round strath and mountain, stamped by the ancient tongue
On rock and ruin darkening as we go,—
Spots where a word, ghostlike, survives to show
What crimes from hate, or desperate love, have sprung;
From honour misconceived, or fancied wrong,
What feuds, not quenched but fed by mutual woe.
Yet, though a wild vindictive Race, untamed
By civil arts and labours of the pen,
Could gentleness be scorned by those fierce Men,
Who, to spread wide the reverence they claimed
For patriarchal occupations, named
Von towering Peaks, “Shepherds of Etive Glen”?¹

¹ In Gaelic, *Bha Laill Eile*.

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XI

SUGGESTED AT TYNDRUM IN A STORM

ENOUGH of garlands, of the Arcadian crook,
And all that Greece and Italy have sung
Of Swains reposing myrtle groves among !
Ours couch on naked rocks,—will cross a brook
Swoln with chill rains, nor ever cast a look
This way or that, or give it even a thought
More than by smoothest pathway may be brought
Into a vacant mind. Can written book
Teach what *they* learn? Up, hardy Mountaineer !
And guide the Bard, ambitious to be One
Of Nature's privy council, as thou art,
On cloud-sequestered heights, that see and hear
To what dread Powers He delegates his part
On earth, who works in the heaven of heavens, alone.

XII

THE EARL OF BREADALBANE'S RUINED MANSION AND FAMILY BURIAL-PLACE, NEAR KILLIN

WELL sang the Bard who called the grave, in strains
Thoughtful and sad, the "narrow house." No style
Of fond sepulchral flattery can beguile
Grief of her sting ; nor cheat, where he detains
The sleeping dust, stern Death. How reconcile
With truth, or with each other, decked remains
Of a once warm Abode, and that *new* Pile,
For the departed, built with curious pains
And mausolean pomp? Yet here they stand
Together,—'mid trim walks and artful bowers,
To be looked down upon by ancient hills,
That, for the living and the dead, demand
And prompt a harmony of genuine powers ;
Concord that elevates the mind, and stills.

XIII

"REST AND BE THANKFUL !"

AT THE HEAD OF GLENCROE

DOUBLING and doubling with laborious walk,
Who, that has gained at length the wished-for Height,
This brief, this simple wayside Call can slight,
And rests not thankful? Whether cheered by talk

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With some loved friend, or by the unseen hawk
Whistling to clouds and sky-born streams that shine,
At the sun's outbreak, as with light divine,
Ere they descend to nourish root and stalk
Of valley flowers. Nor, while the limbs repose,
Will we forget that, as the fowl can keep
Absolute stillness, poised aloft in air,
And fishes front, unmoved, the torrent's sweep,—
So may the Soul, through powers that Faith bestows,
Win rest, and ease, and peace, with bliss that Angels share.

XIV

HIGHLAND HUT

SEE what gay wild flowers deck this earth-built Cot,
Whose smoke, forth-issuing whence and how it may,
Shines in the greeting of the sun's first ray
Like wreaths of vapour without stain or blot.
The limpid mountain rill avoids it not ;
And why shouldst thou?—If rightly trained and bred,
Humanity is humble, finds no spot
Which her Heaven-guided feet refuse to tread.
The walls are cracked, sunk is the flowery roof,
Undressed the pathway leading to the door ;
But love, as Nature loves, the lonely Poor ;
Search, for their worth, some gentle heart wrong-proof,
Meek, patient, kind, and, were its trials fewer,
Belike less happy.—Stand no more aloof !

XV

THE BROWNIE¹

“How disappeared he?” Ask the newt and toad ;
Ask of his fellow-men, and they will tell
How he was found, cold as an icicle,
Under an arch of that forlorn abode ;
Where he, unpropped, and by the gathering flood
Of years hemmed round, had dwelt, prepared to try
Privation's worst extremities, and die
With no one near save the omnipresent God.

¹ Upon a small island, not far from the head of Loch Lomond, are some remains of an ancient building, which was for several years the abode of a solitary Individual, one of the last survivors of the clan of Macfarlane, once powerful in that neighbourhood. Passing along the shore opposite this island in the year 1814, the Author learned these particulars, and that this person then living there had acquired the appellation of “The Brownie.” See “The Brownie's Cell,” p. 274, to which the following is a sequel.

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Verily so to live was an awful choice—
 A choice that wears the aspect of a doom ;
 But in the mould of mercy all is cast
 For Souls familiar with the eternal Voice ;
 And this forgotten Taper to the last
 Drove from itself, we trust, all frightful gloom.

- XVI

TO THE PLANET VENUS, AN EVENING STAR
 COMPOSED AT LOCH LOMOND

THOUGH joy attend Thee orient at the birth
 Of dawn, it cheers the lofty spirit most
 To watch thy course when Daylight, fled from earth,
 In the grey sky hath left his lingering Ghost,
 Perplexed as if between a splendour lost
 And splendour slowly mustering. Since the Sun,
 The absolute, the world-absorbing One,
 Relinquished half his empire to the host
 Emboldened by thy guidance, holy Star,
 Holy as princely—who that looks on thee,
 Touching, as now, in thy humility
 The mountain borders of this seat of care,
 Can question that thy countenance is bright,
 Celestial Power, as much with love as light ?

XVII

BOTHWELL CASTLE ¹

PASSED UNSEEN, ON ACCOUNT OF STORMY WEATHER

IMMURED in Bothwell's towers, at times the Brave
 (So beautiful is Clyde) forgot to mourn
 The liberty they lost at Bannockburn.
 Once on those steep / I roamed at large, and have
 In mind the landscape, as if still in sight ;
 The river glides, the woods before me wave ;
 Then why repine that now in vain I crave
 Needless renewal of an old delight ?
 Better to thank a dear and long-past day
 For joy its sunny hours were free to give
 Than blame the present, that our wish hath crost.
 Memory, like sleep, hath powers which dreams obey,
 Dreams, vivid dreams, that are not fugitive :
 How little that she cherishes is lost !

¹ In my Sister's Journal is an account of Bothwell Castle as it appeared to us at that time.

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XVIII

PICTURE OF DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN, AT HAMILTON PALACE

AMID a fertile region green with wood
And fresh with rivers, well did it become
The ducal Owner, in his palace-home
To naturalise this tawny Lion brood ;
Children of Art, that claim strange brotherhood
(Couched in their den) with those that roam at large
Over the burning wilderness, and charge
The wind with terror while they roar for food.
Sate are *these* ; and stilled to eye and ear ;
Hence, while we gaze, a more enduring fear !
Yet is the Prophet calm, nor would the cave
Daunt him—if his Companions, now bedrowsed
Outstretched and listless, were by hunger roused :
Man placed him here, and God, he knows, can save.

XIX

THE AVON

A FEEDER OF THE ANNAN

AVON—a precious, an immortal name !
Yet is it one that other rivulets bear
Like this unheard-of, and their channels wear
Like this contented, though unknown to Fame :
For great and sacred is the modest claim
Of Streams to Nature's love, where'er they flow ;
And ne'er did Genius slight them, as they go,
Tree, flower, and green herb, feeding without blame.
But Praise can waste her voice on work of tears,
Anguish, and death : full oft where innocent blood
Has mixed its current with the limpid flood,
Her heaven-offending trophies Glory rears :
Never for like distinction may the good
Shrink from *thy* name, pure Rill, with unpleased ears.

XX

SUGGESTED BY A VIEW FROM AN EMINENCE IN INGLEWOOD FOREST ¹

THE forest huge of ancient Caledon
Is but a name, no more is Inglewood,

¹ The extensive forest of Inglewood has been enclosed within my memory. I was well acquainted with it in its ancient state. The

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That swept from hill to hill, from flood to flood :
 On her last thorn the nightly moon has shone ;
 Yet still, though unappropriate Wild be none,
 Fair parks spread wide where Adam Bell might deign
 With Clym o' the Clough, were they alive again,
 To kill for merry feast their venison.
 Nor wants the holy Abbot's gliding Shade
 His church with monumental wreck bestrown ;
 The feudal Warrior-chief, a Ghost unlaid,
 Hath still his castle, though a skeleton,
 That he may watch by night, and lessons con
 Of power that perishes, and rights that fade.

XXI

HART'S-HORN TREE, NEAR PENRITH

HERE stood an Oak, that long had borne affixed
 To his huge trunk, or, with more subtle art,
 Among its withering topmost branches mixed,
 The palmy antlers of a hunted Hart,
 Whom the Dog Hercules pursued—his part
 Each desperately sustaining, till at last
 Both sank and died, the life-veins of the chased
 And chaser bursting here with one dire smart.
 Mutual the victory, mutual the defeat !
 High was the trophy hung with pitiless pride ;
 Say, rather, with that generous sympathy
 That wants not, even in rudest breasts, a seat ;
 And, for this feeling's sake, let no one chide
 Verse that would guard thy memory, HART'S-HORN TREE !

XXII

FANCY AND TRADITION

THE Lovers took within this ancient grove
 Their last embrace ; beside those crystal springs
 The Hermit saw the Angel spread his wings
 For instant flight ; the Sage in yon alcove
 Sate musing ; on that hill the Bard would rove,
 Not mute, where now the linnet only sings :
 Thus everywhere to truth Tradition clings,

Hart's-horn tree mentioned in the next Sonnet was one of its remarkable objects, as well as another tree that grew upon an eminence not far from Penrith : it was single and conspicuous ; and being of a round shape, though it was universally known to be a Sycamore, it was always called the "*Round Thorn*," so difficult is it to chain fancy down to fact.

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Or Fancy localises Powers we love.
Were only History licensed to take note
Of things gone by, her meagre monuments
Would ill suffice for persons and events :
There is an ampler page for man to quote,
A readier book of manifold contents,
Studied alike in palace and in cot.

XXIII

COUNTESS'S PILLAR ¹

WHILE the Poor gather round, till the end of time
May this bright flower of Charity display
Its bloom, unfolding at the appointed day ;
Flower than the loveliest of the vernal prime
Lovelier—transplanted from heaven's purest clime !
"Charity never faileth : " on that creed,
More than on written testament or deed,
The pious Lady built with hope sublime.
Alms on this stone to be dealt out, *for ever* !
"LAUS DEO." Many a Stranger passing by
Has with that Parting mixed a filial sigh,
Blest its humane Memorial's fond endeavour ;
And, fastening on those lines an eye tear-glazed,
Has ended, though no Clerk, with " God be praised ! "

XXIV

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES

FROM THE ROMAN STATION AT OLD PENRITH

How profitless the relics that we cull,
Troubling the last holds of ambitious Rome,
Unless they chasten fancies that presume
Too high, or idle agitations lull !
Of the world's flatteries if the brain be full,
To have no seat for thought were better doom,
Like this old helmet, or the eyeless skull
Of him who gloried in its nodding plume.

¹ Suggested by the recollection of Julian's Bower and other traditions connected with this ancient forest.

On the roadside between Penrith and Appleby, there stands a pillar with the following inscription :—

" This Pillar was erected, in the year 1656, by Anne Countess Dowager of Pembroke, &c., for a memorial of her last parting with her pious mother, Margaret Countess Dowager of Cumberland, on the 2d of April, 1616 ; in memory whereof she hath left an annuity of 4*l.* to be distributed to the poor of the parish of Brougham, every 2d day of April for ever, upon the stone table placed hard by. Laus Deo ! "

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Heaven out of view, our wishes what are they?
 Our fond regrets tenacious in their grasp?
 The Sage's theory? the Poet's lay?
 Mere Fibulæ without a robe to clasp;
 Obsolete lamps, whose light no time recalls;
 Urns without ashes, tearless lacrymals!

XXV

APOLOGY FOR THE FOREGOING POEMS

No more: the end is sudden and abrupt,
 Abrupt—as without preconceived design
 Was the beginning; yet the several Lays
 Have moved in order, to each other bound
 By a continuous and acknowledged tie
 Though unapparent—like those Shapes distinct
 That yet survive ensculptured on the walls
 Of palaces, or temples, 'mid the wreck
 Of famed Persepolis; each following each,
 As might beseech a stately embassy,
 In set array; these bearing in their hands
 Ensign of civil power, weapon of war,
 Or gift to be presented at the throne
 Of the Great King; and others, as they go
 In priestly vest, with holy offerings charged,
 Or leading victims drest for sacrifice.
 Nor will the Power we serve, that sacred Power,
 The Spirit of humanity, disdain
 A ministration humble but sincere,
 That from a threshold loved by every Muse
 Its impulse took—that sorrow-stricken door,
 Whence, as a current from its fountain-head,
 Our thoughts have issued, and our feelings flowed,
 Receiving, willingly or not, fresh strength
 From kindred sources; while around us sighed
 (Life's three first seasons having passed away)
 Leaf-scattering winds; and hoar-frost sprinklings fell
 (Foretaste of winter) on the moorland heights;
 And every day brought with it tidings new
 Of rash change, ominous for the public weal.
 Hence, if dejection has too oft encroached
 Upon that sweet and tender melancholy
 Which may itself be cherished and caressed
 More than enough; a fault so natural
 (Even with the young, the hopeful, or the gay)
 For prompt forgiveness will not sue in vain.

XXVI

THE HIGHLAND BROACH ¹

IF to Tradition faith be due,
 And echoes from old verse speak true,
 Ere the meek Saint, Columba, bore
 Glad tidings to Iona's shore,
 No common light of nature blessed
 The mountain region of the west,
 A land where gentle manners ruled
 O'er men in dauntless virtues schooled,
 That raised, for centuries, a bar
 Impervious to the tide of war :
 Yet peaceful Arts did entrance gain
 Where haughty Force had striven in vain ;
 And, 'mid the works of skilful hands,
 By wanderers brought from foreign lands
 And various climes, was not unknown
 The clasp that fixed the Roman Gown ;
 The Fibula, whose shape, I ween,
 Still in the Highland Broach is seen,
 The silver Broach of massy frame,
 Worn at the breast of some grave Dame
 On road or path, or at the door
 Of fern-thatched hut on heathy moor :
 But delicate of yore its mould,
 And the material finest gold ;
 As might beseem the fairest Fair,
 Whether she graced a royal chair,
 Or shed, within a vaulted hall,
 No fancied lustre on the wall
 Where shields of mighty heroes hung,
 While Fingal heard what Ossian sung.
 The heroic Age expired—it slept
 Deep in its tomb :—the bramble crept
 O'er Fingal's hearth ; the grassy sod

¹ On ascending a hill that leads from Loch Awe towards Inverary, I fell into conversation with a woman of the humbler class who wore one of those Highland Broaches. I talked with her about it ; and upon parting with her, when I said with a kindness I truly felt—"May that Broach continue in your family through many generations to come, as you have already possessed it"—she thanked me most becomingly, and seemed not a little moved. The exact resemblance which the old Broach (still in use, though rarely met with, among the Highlanders) bears to the Roman Fibula must strike every one, and concurs, with the plaid and kilt, to recall to mind the communication which the ancient Romans had with this remote country.

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Grew on the floors his sons had trod :
 Malvina ! where art thou ? Their state
 The noblest-born must abdicate ;
 The fairest, while with fire and sword
 Come Spoilers—horde impelling horde,
 Must walk the sorrowing mountains, drest
 By ruder hands in homelier vest.
 Yet still the female bosom lent,
 And loved to borrow, ornament ;
 Still was its inner world a place
 Reached by the dews of heavenly grace ;
 Still pity to this last retreat
 Clovè fondly ; to his favourite seat
 Love wound his way by soft approach,
 Beneath a massier Highland Broach.

When alternations came of rage
 Yet fiercer, in a darker age ;
 And feuds, where, clan encountering clan,
 The weaker perished to a man ;
 For maid and mother, when despair
 Might else have triumphed, baffling prayer,
 One small possession lacked not power,
 Provided in a calmer hour,
 To meet such need as might befall—
 Roof, raiment, bread, or burial :
 For woman, even of tears bereft,
 The hidden silver Broach was left.

As generations come and go
 Their arts, their customs, ebb and flow ;
 Fate, fortune, sweep strong powers away,
 And feeble, of themselves, decay ;
 What poor abodes the heir-loom hide,
 In which the castle once took pride !
 Tokens, once kept as boasted wealth,
 If saved at all, are saved by stealth.
 Lo ! ships, from seas by nature barred,
 Mount along ways by man prepared ;
 And in far-stretching vales, whose streams
 Seek other seas, their canvas gleams.
 Lo ! busy towns spring up, on coasts
 Thronged yesterday by airy ghosts ;
 Soon, like a lingering star forlorn
 Among the novelties of morn,
 While young delights on old encroach,
 Will vanish the last Highland Broach.

But when, from out their viewless bed,
Like vapours, years have rolled and spread ;
And this poor verse, and worthier lays,
Shall yield no light of love or praise ;
Then, by the spade, or cleaving plough,
Or torrent from the mountain's brow,
Or whirlwind, reckless what his might
Entombs, or forces into light ;
Blind Chance, a volunteer ally,
That oft befriends Antiquity,
And clears Oblivion from reproach,
May render back the Highland Broach.

DEVOTIONAL INCITEMENTS¹

“Not to the earth confined,
Ascend to heaven.”

WHERE will they stop, those breathing Powers,
The Spirits of the new-born flowers ?
They wander with the breeze, they wind .
Where'er the streams a passage find ;
Up from their native ground they rise
In mute aërial harmonies ;
From humble violet—modest thyme—
Exhaled, the essential odours climb .
As if no space below the sky
Their subtle flight could satisfy :
Heaven will not tax our thoughts with pride
If like ambition be *their* guide.

Roused by this kindest of May-showers,
The spirit-quickener of the flowers,
That with moist virtue softly cleaves
The buds, and freshens the young leaves,
The birds pour forth their souls in notes
Of rapture from a thousand throats—
Here checked by too impetuous haste,
While there the music runs to waste,
With bounty more and more enlarged,
Till the whole air is overcharged ;
Give ear, O Man ! to their appeal
And thirst for no inferior zeal,
Thou, who canst *think*, as well as feel.

Mount from the earth ; aspire ! aspire !
So pleads the town's cathedral quire,
In strains that from their solemn height

¹ Written at Rydal Mount.

Sink, to attain a loftier flight ;
 While incense from the altar breathes
 Rich fragrance in embodied wreaths ;
 Or, floating on swarming censers, shrouds
 The : : : : : in clouds
 Around angelic Forms, the still
 Creation of the painter's skill,
 That on the service wait concealed
 One moment, and the next revealed
 —Cast off your bonds, awake, arise,
 And for no transient ecstasies !
 What else can mean the visual plea
 Of still or moving imagery—
 The iterated summons loud,
 Not wasted on the attendant crowd,
 Nor wholly lost upon the throng
 Hurrying the busy streets along ?
 Alas ! the sanctities combined
 By art to unsensualise the mind,
 Decay and languish ; or, as creeds
 And humours change, are spurned like weeds ;
 The priests are from their altars thrust ;
 Temples are levelled with the dust ;
 And solemn rites and awful forms
 Founder amid fanatic storms.
 Yet evermore, through years renewed
 In undisturbed vicissitude
 Of seasons balancing their flight
 On the swift wings of day and night,
 Kind Nature keeps a heavenly door
 Wide open for the scattered Poor.
 Where flower-breathed incense to the skies
 Is wafted in mute harmonies ;
 And ground fresh-cloven by the plough
 Is fragrant with a humbler vow ;
 Where birds and brooks from leafy dells
 Chime forth unwearied canticles,
 And vapours magnify and spread
 The glory of the sun's bright head—
 Still constant in her worship, still
 Conforming to the eternal Will,
 Whether men sow or reap the fields,
 Divine monition Nature yields,
 That not by bread alone we live,
 Or what a hand of flesh can give ;

‘Calm is the Fragrant Air’ 539

That every day should leave some part
Free for a sabbath of the heart :
So shall the seventh be truly blest,
From morn to eve, with hallowed rest.

(1832)

“CALM IS THE FRAGRANT AIR”

CALM is the fragrant air, and loth to lose
Day’s grateful warmth, tho’ moist with falling dews.
Look for the stars, you’ll say that there are none ;
Look up a second time, and, one by one,
You mark them twinkling out with silvery light,
And wonder how they could elude the sight !
The birds, of late so noisy in their bowers,
Warbled a while with faint and fainter powers,
But now are silent as the dim-seen flowers :
Nor does the village Church-clock’s iron tone
The time’s and season’s influence disown ;
Nine beats distinctly to each other bound
In drowsy sequence—how unlike the sound
That, in rough winter, oft inflicts a fear
On fireside listeners, doubting what they hear !
The shepherd, bent on rising with the sun,
Had closed his door before the day was done,
And now with thankful heart to bed doth creep,
And joins his little children in their sleep.
The bat, lured forth where trees the lane o’ershade,
Flits and reflits along the close arcade ;
The busy dor-hawk chases the white moth
With burring note, which Industry and Sloth
Might both be pleased with, for it suits them both.
A stream is heard—I see it not, but know
By its soft music whence the waters flow :
Wheels and the tread of hoofs are heard no more ;
One boat there was, but it will touch the shore
With the next dipping of its slackened oar ;
Faint sound, that, for the gayest of the gay,
Might give to serious thought a moment’s sway,
As a last token of man’s toilsome day !

(1832)

RURAL ILLUSIONS ¹

SYLPH was it ? or a Bird more bright
Than those of fabulous stock ?

¹ Written at Rydal Mount. Observed a hundred times in the grounds there.

540 Upon the late General Fast

A second darted by ;—and lo !
 Another of the flock,
 Through sunshine flitting from the bough
 To nestle in the rock.
 Transient deception ! a gay freak
 Of April's mimicries !
 Those brilliant strangers, hailed with joy
 Among the budding trees,
 Proved last year's leaves, pushed from the spray
 To frolic on the breeze.
 Maternal Flora ! show thy face,
 And let thy hand be seen,
 Thy hand here sprinkling tiny flowers,
 That, as they touch the green,
 Take root (so seems it) and look up
 In honour of their Queen.
 Yet, sooth, those little starry specks,
 That not in vain aspired
 To be confounded with live growths,
 Most dainty, most admired,
 Were only blossoms dropt from twigs
 Of their own offspring tired.
 Not such the World's illusive shows ;
Her wingless flutterings,
 Her blossoms which, though shed, outbrave
 The floweret as it springs,
 For the undeceived, smile as they may,
 Are melancholy things :
 But gentle Nature plays her part
 With ever-varying wiles,
 And transient feignings with plain truth
 So well she reconciles,
 That those fond Idlers most are pleased
 Whom oftenest she beguiles.

(1832)

UPON THE LATE GENERAL FAST

MARCH 1832

RELUCTANT call it was ; the rite delayed ;
 And in the Senate some there were who doffed
 The last of their humanity, and scoffed
 At providential judgments, undismayed
 By their own daring. But the People prayed
 As with one voice ; their flinty heart grew soft
 With penitential sorrow, and aloft

Their spirit mounted, crying, "God us aid!"
 Oh that with aspirations more intense,
 Chastised by self-abasement more profound,
 This People, once so happy, so renowned
 For liberty, would seek from God defence
 Against far heavier ill, the pestilence
 Of revolution, impiously unbound!

FILIAL PIETY

ON THE WAYSIDE BETWEEN PRESTON AND LIVERPOOL

UNTOUCHED through all severity of cold;
 Inviolatè, whate'er the cottage hearth
 Might need for comfort, or for festal mirth;
 That Pile of Turf is half a century old:
 Yes, Traveller! fifty winters have been told
 Since suddenly the dart of death went forth
 'Gainst him who raised it,—his last work on earth:
 Thence has it, with the Son, so strong a hold
 Upon his Father's memory, that his hands,
 Through reverence, touch it only to repair
 Its waste.—Though crumbling with each breath of air,
 In annual renovation thus it stands—
 Rude Mausoleum! but wrens nestle there,
 And red-breasts warble when sweet sounds are rare.

(1832)

TO B. R. HAYDON, ON SEEING HIS PICTURE
 OF NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE ON THE
 ISLAND OF ST. HELENA

HAYDON! let worthier judges praise the skill
 Here by thy pencil shown in truth of lines
 And charm of colours; /I applaud those signs
 Of thought, that give the true poetic thrill;
 That unencumbered whole of blank and still
 Sky without cloud—ocean without a wave;
 And the one Man that laboured to enslave
 The World, sole-standing high on the bare hill—
 Back turned, arms folded, the unapparent face
 Tinged, we may fancy, in this dreary place,
 With light reflected from the invisible sun
 Set, like his fortunes; but not set for aye
 Like them. The unguilty Power pursues his way,
 And before *him* doth dawn perpetual run.

(1832)

A Wren's Nest

A WREN'S NEST¹

AMONG the dwellings framed by birds
In field or forest with nice care,
Is none that with the little Wren's
In snugness may compare.
No door the tenement requires,
And seldom needs a laboured roof :
Yet is it to the fiercest sun
Impervious, and storm-proof.
So warm, so beautiful withal,
In perfect fitness for its aim,
That to the Kind by special grace
Their instinct surely came.
And when for their abodes they seek
An opportune recess,
The hermit has no finer eye
For shadowy quietness.
These find, 'mid ivied abbey-walls,
A canopy in some still nook ;
Others are pent-housed by a brae
That overhangs a brook.
There to the brooding bird her mate
Warbles by fits his low clear song ;
And by the busy streamlet both
Are sung to all day long.
Or in sequestered lanes they build,
Where, till the flitting bird's return,
Her eggs within the nest repose,
Like relics in an urn.
But still, where general choice is good,
There is a better and a best ;
And, among fairest objects, some
Are fairer than the rest ;
This, one of those small builders proved
In a green covert, where, from out
The forehead of a pollard oak,
The leafy antlers sprout ;
For She who planned the mossy lodge,
Mistrusting her evasive skill,
Had to a Primrose looked for aid
Her wishes to fulfil.

¹ Written at Rydal Mount.

High on the trunk's projecting brow,
And fixed an infant's span above
The budding flowers, peeped forth the nest
The prettiest of the grove !
The treasure proudly did I show
To some whose minds without disdain
Can turn to little things ; but once
Looked up for it in vain :
'Tis gone—a ruthless spoiler's prey,
Who heeds not beauty, love, or song,
'Tis gone ! (so seemed it) and we grieved
Indignant at the wrong.
Just three days after, passing by
In clearer light the moss-built cell
I saw, espied its shaded mouth ;
And felt that all was well.
The Primrose for a veil had spread
The largest of her upright leaves ;
And thus, for purposes benign,
A simple flower deceives.
Concealed from friends who might disturb
Thy quiet with no ill intent,
Secure from evil eyes and hands
On barbarous plunder bent,
Rest, Mother-bird ! and when thy young
Take flight, and thou art free to roam,
When withered is the guardian Flower,
And empty thy late home,
Think how ye prospered, thou and thine,
Amid the unviolated grove,
Housed near the growing Primrose-tuft
In foresight, or in love.

(1833)

TO ———

UPON THE BIRTH OF HER FIRST-BORN CHILD,
MARCH 1833

"Tum porro puer, ut sævis projectus ab undis
Navita, nudus humi jacet, etc."—LUCRETIVS.

LIKE a shipwrecked Sailor tost
By rough waves on a perilous coast,
Lies the Babe, in helplessness
And in tenderest nakedness,

Flung by labouring nature forth
Upon the mercies of the earth.
Can its eyes beseech?—no more
Than the hands are free to implore :
Voice but serves for one brief cry
Plaint was it ? or prophecy
Of sorrow that will surely come ?
Omen of man's grievous doom !

But, O Mother ! by the close
Duly granted to thy throes ;
By the silent thanks, now tending
Incense-like to Heaven, descending
Now to mingle and to move
With the gush of earthly love,
As a debt to that frail Creature,
Instrument of struggling Nature
For the blissful calm, the peace
Known but to this *one* release—
Can the pitying spirit doubt
That for human-kind springs out
From the penalty a sense
Of more than mortal recompence ?

As a floating summer cloud,
Though of gorgeous drapery proud,
To the sun-burnt traveller,
Or the stooping labourer,
Oft-times makes its bounty known
By its shadow round him thrown ;
So, by chequerings of sad cheer,
Heavenly Guardians, brooding near,
Of their presence tell—too bright
Haply for corporeal sight !
Ministers of grace divine
Feelingly their brows incline
O'er this seeming Castaway
Breathing, in the light of day,
Something like the faintest breath
That has power to baffle death—
Beautiful, while very weakness
Captivates like passive meekness.

And, sweet Mother ! under warrant
Of the universal Parent,
Who repays in season due
Them who have, like thee, been true
To the filial chain let down

From his everlasting throne,
Angels hovering round thy couch,
With their softest whispers vouch,
That—whatever griefs may fret,
Cares entangle, sins beset,
This thy First-born, and with tears
Stain her cheek in future years—
Heavenly succour, not denied
To the babe, whate'er betide,
Will to the woman be supplied !
Mother ! blest be thy calm ease ;
Blest the starry promises,—
And the firmament benign
Hallowed be it, where they shine !
Yes, for them whose souls have scope
Ample for a wingèd hope,
And can earthward bend an ear
For needful listening, pledge is here,
That, if thy new-born Charge shall tread
In thy footsteps, and be led
By that other Guide, whose light
Of manly virtues, mildly bright,
Gave him first the wished-for part
In thy gentle virgin heart ;
Then, amid the storms of life
Presignified by that dread strife
Whence ye have escaped together,
She may look for serene weather ;
In all trials sure to find
Comfort for a faithful mind ;
Kindlier issues, holier rest,
Than even now await her prest,
Conscious Nursling, to thy breast !

THE WARNING¹

A SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING

LIST, the winds of March are blowing ;
Her ground-flowers shrink, afraid of showing

¹ These lines were composed during the fever spread through the Nation by the Reform Bill. As the motives which led to this measure, and the good or evil which has attended or has risen from it, will be duly appreciated by future historians, there is no call for dwelling on the subject in this place. I will content myself with saying that the then condition of the people's mind is not, in these verses,

Their meek heads to the nipping air,
 Which ye feel not, happy pair !
 Sunk into a kindly sleep.
 We, meanwhile, our hope will keep ;
 And if Time leagued with adverse Change
 (Too busy fear !) shall cross its range,
 Whatsoever check they bring,
 Anxious duty hindering,
 To like hope our prayers will cling.

Thus, while the ruminating spirit feeds
 Upon the events of home as life proceeds,
 Affections pure and holy in their source
 Gain a fresh impulse, run a livelier course ;
 Hopes that within the Father's heart prevail,
 Are in the experienced Grandsire's slow to fail ;
 And if the harp pleased his gay youth, it rings
 To his grave touch with no unready strings,
 While thoughts press on, and feelings overflow,
 And quick words round him fall like flakes of snow.

Thanks to the Powers that yet maintain their sway,
 And have renewed the tributary Lay.
 Truths of the heart flock in with eager pace,
 And FANCY greets them with a fond embrace ;
 Swift as the rising sun his beams extends
 She shoots the tidings forth to distant friends ;
 Their gifts she hails (deemed precious, as they prove
 For the unconscious Babe so prompt a love !)—
 But from this peaceful centre of delight
 Vague sympathies have urged her to take flight :
 Rapt into upper regions, like the bee
 That sucks from mountain heath her honey fee ;
 Or, like the warbling lark intent to shroud
 His head in sunbeams or a bowery cloud,
 She soars—and here and there her pinions rest
 On proud towers, like this humble cottage, blest
 With a new visitant, an infant guest—
 Towers where red streamers flout the breezy sky
 In pomp foreseen by her creative eye,
 When feasts shall crowd the hall, and steeple bells
 Glad proclamation make, and heights and dells
 Catch the blithe music as it sinks and swells,
 And harboured ships, whose pride is on the sea,
 Shall hoist their topmost flags in sign of glee,
 Honouring the hope of noble ancestry.

But who (though neither reckoning ills assigned

By Nature, nor reviewing in the mind
The track that was, and is, and must be, worn
With weary feet by all of woman born)—
Shall *now* by such a gift with joy be moved,
Nor feel the fulness of that joy reproved?
Not He, whose last faint memory will command
The truth that Britain was his native land;
Whose infant soul was tutored to confide
In the cleansed faith for which her martyrs died;
Whose boyish ear the voice of her renown
With rapture thrilled; whose Youth revered the crown
Of Saxon liberty that Alfred wore,
Alfred, dear Babe, thy great Progenitor!
—Not He, who from her mellowed practice drew
His social sense of just, and fair, and true;
And saw, thereafter, on the soil of France
Rash Polity begin her maniac dance,
Foundations broken up, the deeps run wild,
Nor grieved to see (himself not unbeguiled)—
Woke from the dream, the dreamer to upbraid,
And learn how sanguine expectations fade
When novel trusts by folly are betrayed,—
To see Presumption, turning pale, refrain
From further havoc, but repent in vain,—
Good aims lie down, and perish in the road
Where guilt had urged them on with ceaseless goad,
Proofs thickening round her that on public ends
Domestic virtue vitally depends,
That civic strife can turn the happiest hearth
Into a grievous sore of self-tormenting earth.
Can such a One, dear Babe! though glad and proud
To welcome thee, repel the fears that crowd
Into his English breast, and spare to quake
Less for his own than for thy innocent sake?
Too late—or, should the providence of God
Lead, through dark ways by sin and sorrow trod,
Justice and peace to a secure abode,
Too soon—thou com'st into this breathing world;
Ensigns of mimic outrage are unfurled.
Who shall preserve or prop the tottering Realm?
What hand suffice to govern the state-helm?
If, in the aims of men, the surest test
Of good or bad (whate'er be sought for or profest),
Lie in the means required, or ways ordained,
For compassing the end, else never gained;

Yet governors and governed both are blind
 To this plain truth, or fling it to the wind ;
 If to expedience principle must bow ;
 Past, future, shrinking up beneath the incumbent Now ;
 If cowardly concession still must feed
 The thirst for power in men who ne'er concede ;
 Nor turn aside, unless to shape a way
 For domination at some riper day ;
 If generous Loyalty must stand in awe
 Of subtle Treason, in his mask of law,
 Or with bravado insolent and hard,
 Provoking punishment, to win reward ;
 If office help the factious to conspire,
 And they who *should* extinguish, fan the fire—
 Then, will the sceptre be a straw, the crown
 Sit loosely, like the thistle's crest of down ;
 To be blown off at will, by Power that spares it
 In cunning patience, from the head that wears it.

Lost people, trained to theoretic feud !
 Lost above all, ye labouring multitude !
 Bewildered whether ye, by slanderous tongues
 Deceived, mistake calamities for wrongs ;
 And over fancied usurpations brood,
 Oft snapping at revenge in sullen mood ;
 Or, from long stress of real injuries, fly
 To desperation for a remedy ;
 In bursts of outrage spread your judgments wide,
 And to your wrath cry out, " Be thou our guide ;"
 Or, bound by oaths, come forth to tread earth's floor
 In marshalled thousands, darkening street and moor
 With the worst shape mock-patience ever wore ;
 Or, to the giddy top of self-esteem
 By Flatterers carried, mount into a dream
 Of boundless suffrage, at whose sage behest
 Justice shall rule, disorder be suppress,
 And every man sit down as Plenty's Guest !
 —Oh for a bridle bitted with remorse
 To stop your Leaders in their headstrong course !
 Oh may the Almighty scatter with his grace
 These mists, and lead you to a safer place,
 By paths no human wisdom can foretrace !
 May He pour round you, from worlds far above
 Man's feverish passions, his pure light of love,
 That quietly restores the natural mien
 To hope, and makes truth willing to be seen !

Else shall your blood-stained hands in frenzy reap
 Fields gaily sown when promises were cheap.—
 Why is the Past belied with wicked art,
 The Future made to play so false a part,
 Among a people famed for strength of mind,
 Foremost in freedom, noblest of mankind?
 We act as if we joyed in the sad tune
 Storms make in rising, valued in the moon
 Nought but her changes. Thus, ungrateful Nation!
 If thou persist, and scorning moderation,
 Spread for thyself the snares of tribulation,
 Whom, then, shall meekness guard? What saving skill
 Lie in forbearance, strength in standing still?
 —Soon shall the widow (for the speed of Time
 Nought equals when the hours are winged with crime)
 Widow, or wife, implore on tremulous knee,
 From him who judged her lord, a like decree;
 The skies will weep o'er old men desolate:
 Ye little-ones! Earth shudders at your fate,
 Outcasts and homeless orphans——

But turn, my Soul, and from the sleeping pair
 Learn thou the beauty of omniscient care!
 Be strong in faith, bid anxious thoughts lie still;
 Seek for the good and cherish it—the ill
 Oppose, or bear with a submissive will.

(1833)

"IF THIS GREAT WORLD OF JOY AND PAIN"

If this great world of joy and pain
 Revolve in one sure track;
 If freedom, set, will rise again,
 And virtue, flown, come back;
 Woe to the purblind crew who fill
 The heart with each day's care;
 Nor gain, from past or future, skill
 To bear, and to forbear!

(1833)

ON A HIGH PART OF THE COAST OF
 CUMBERLAND¹

Easter Sunday, April 7

THE AUTHOR'S SIXTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY

THE Sun, that seemed so mildly to retire,
 Flung back from distant climes a streaming fire,

¹ Composed on the road between Moresby and Whitehaven.

Whose blaze is now subdued to tender gleams,
 Prelude of night's approach with soothing dreams.
 Look round ;—of all the clouds not one is moving ;
 'Tis the still hour of thinking, feeling, loving.
 Silent, and stedfast as the vaulted sky,
 The boundless plain of waters seems to lie :—
 Comes that low sound from breezes rustling o'er
 The grass-crowned headland that conceals the shore?
 No ; 'tis the earth-voice of the mighty sea,
 Whispering how meek and gentle he *can* be !
 Thou Power supreme ! who, arming to rebuke
 Offenders, dost put off the gracious look,
 And clothe thyself with terrors like the flood
 Of ocean roused into its fiercest mood,
 Whatever discipline thy Will ordain
 For the brief course that must for me remain ;
 Teach me with quick-eared spirit to rejoice
 In admonitions of thy softest voice !
 Whate'er the path these mortal feet may trace,
 Breathe through my soul the blessing of thy grace,
 Glad, through a perfect love, a faith sincere
 Drawn from the wisdom that begins with fear,
 Glad to expand ; and, for a season, free
 From finite cares, to rest absorbed in Thee !

(1833)

(BY THE SEASIDE)

THE sun is couched, the sea-fowl gone to rest,
 And the wild storm hath somewhere found a nest ;
 Air slumbers—wave with wave no longer strives
 Only a heaving of the deep survives,
 A tell-tale motion ! soon will it be laid,
 And by the tide alone the water swayed.
 Stealthy withdrawals, interminglings mild
 Of light with shade in beauty reconciled—
 Such is the prospect far as sight can range,
 The soothing recompence, the welcome change.
 Where, now, the ships that drove before the blast,
 Threatened by angry breakers as they passed ;
 And by a train of flying clouds bemocked ;
 Or, in the hollow surge, at anchor rocked
 As on a bed of death ? Some lodge in peace,
 Saved by His care who bade the tempest cease ;
 And some, too heedless of past danger, court
 Fresh gales to waft them to the far-off port ;

But near, or hanging sea and sky between,
 Not one of all those wingèd powers is seen,
 Seen in her course, nor 'mid this quiet heard ;
 Yet oh ! how gladly would the air be stirred
 By some acknowledgment of thanks and praise,
 Soft in its temper as those vesper lays
 Sung to the Virgin while accordant oars
 Urge the slow bark along Calabrian shores ;
 A sea-born service through the mountains felt,
 Till into one loved vision all things melt :
 Or like those hymns that soothe with graver sound
 The gulfy coast of Norway iron-bound ;
 And, from the wide and open Baltic, rise
 With punctual care, Lutheran harmonies.
 Hush, not a voice is here ! but why repine,
 Now when the star of eve comes forth to shine
 On British waters with that look benign ?
 Ye mariners, that plough your onward way,
 Or in the haven rest, or sheltering bay,
 May silent thanks at least to God be given
 With a full heart ; "our thoughts are *heard* in heaven."
 (1833)

POEMS

COMPOSED OR SUGGESTED DURING A TOUR IN
 THE SUMMER OF 1833

I

"ADIEU, RYDALIAN LAURELS !"

ADIEU, Rydalian Laurels ! that have grown
 And spread as if ye knew that days might come
 When ye would shelter in a happy home,
 On this fair Mount, a Poet of your own,
 One who ne'er ventured for a Delphic crown
 To sue the God ; but, haunting your green shade
 All seasons through, is humbly pleased to braid
 Ground-flowers, beneath your guardianship, self-sown.
 Farewell ! no Minstrels now with harp new-strung
 For summer wandering quit their household bowers ;
 Yet not for this wants Poesy a tongue
 To cheer the Itinerant on whom she pours
 Her spirit, while he crosses lonely moors,
 Or musing sits forsaken halls among.

“WHY SHOULD THE ENTHUSIAST”

WHY should the Enthusiast, journeying through this Isle,
 Repine as if his hour were come too late?
 Not unprotected in her mouldering state,
 Antiquity salutes him with a smile,
 'Mid fruitful fields that ring with jocund toil,
 And pleasure-grounds where Taste, refined Co-mate
 Of Truth and Beauty, strives to imitate,
 Far as she may, primeval Nature's style.
 Fair land! by Time's parental love made free,
 By Social Order's watchful arms embraced;
 With unexampled union meet in thee,
 For eye and mind, the present and the past;
 With golden prospect for futurity,
 If that be revered which ought to last.

III

“THEY CALLED THEE MERRY ENGLAND”

THEY called Thee MERRY ENGLAND, in old time;
 A happy people won for thee that name
 With envy heard in many a distant clime;
 And, spite of change, for me thou keep'st the same
 Endearing title, a responsive chime
 To the heart's fond belief; though some there are
 Whose sterner judgments deem that word a snare
 For inattentive Fancy, like the lime
 Which foolish birds are caught with. Can, I ask,
 This face of rural beauty be a mask
 For discontent, and poverty, and crime;
 These spreading towns a cloak for lawless will?
 Forbid it, Heaven!—and MERRY ENGLAND still
 Shall be thy rightful name, in prose and rhyme!

IV

TO THE RIVER GRETA, NEAR KESWICK

GRETA, what fearful listening! when huge stones
 Rumble along thy bed, block after block:
 Or, whirling with reiterated shock,
 Combat, while darkness aggravates the groans:
 But if thou (like Cocytus from the moans
 Heard on his rueful margin) thence wert named
 The Mourner, thy true nature was defamed,
 And the habitual murmur that atones
 For thy worst rage, forgotten. Oft as Spring

Decks, on thy sinuous banks, her thousand thrones
 Seats of glad instinct and love's carolling,
 The concert, for the happy, then may vie
 With liveliest peals of birth-harmony :
 To a grieved heart, the notes are benisons.

V

TO THE RIVER DERWENT

AMONG the mountains were we nursed, loved Stream,
 Thou near the eagle's nest—within brief sail,
 I, of his bold wing floating on the gale,
 Where thy deep voice could lull me ! Faint the beam
 Of human life when first allowed to gleam
 On mortal notice.—Glory of the vale,
 Such thy meek outset, with a crown, though frail,
 Kept in perpetual verdure by the steam
 Of thy soft breath !—Less vivid wreath entwined
 Nemæan victor's brow ; less bright was worn,
 Meed of some Roman chief—in triumph borne
 With captives chained ; and shedding from his car
 The sunset splendours of a finished war
 Upon the proud enslavers of mankind !
 (1819)

VI

IN SIGHT OF THE TOWN OF COCKERMOUTH

Where the Author was born, and his Father's remains are laid.
 A POINT of life between my Parent's dust,
 And yours, my buried Little-ones ! am I ;
 And to those graves looking habitually
 In kindred quiet I repose my trust.
 Death to the innocent is more than just,
 And, to the sinner, mercifully bent ;
 So may I hope, if truly I repent
 And meekly bear the ills which bear I must :
 And You, my Offspring ! that do still remain,
 Yet may outstrip me in the appointed race,
 If e'er, through fault of mine, in mutual pain
 We breathed together for a moment's space,
 The wrong, by love provoked, let love arraign,
 And only love keep in your hearts a place.

VII

ADDRESS FROM THE SPIRIT OF COCKERMOUTH CASTLE

"THOU look'st upon me, and dost fondly think,
 Poet ! that, stricken as both are by years,

We, differing once so much, are now Compeers,
 Prepared, when each has stood his time, to sink
 Into the dust. Erewhile a sterner link
 United us ; when thou, in boyish play,
 Entering my dungeon, didst become a prey
 To soul-appalling darkness. Not a blink
 Of light was there ;—and thus did I, thy Tutor,
 Make thy young thoughts acquainted with the grave ;
 While thou wert chasing the winged butterfly
 Through my green courts ; or climbing, a bold suitor,
 Up to the flowers whose golden progeny
 Still round my shattered brow in beauty wave.”

VIII

NUN'S WELL, BRIGHAM

THE cattle crowding round this beverage clear
 To slake their thirst, with reckless hoofs have trod
 The encircling turf into a barren clod ;
 Through which the waters creep, then disappear,
 Born to be lost in Derwent flowing near ;
 Yet, o'er the brink, and round the limestone cell
 Of the pure spring (they call it the “ Nun's Well,”
 Name that first struck by chance my startled ear)
 A tender Spirit broods—the pensive Shade
 Of ritual honours to this Fountain paid
 By hooded Votaresses with saintly cheer ;
 Albeit oft the Virgin-mother mild
 Looked down with pity upon eyes beguiled
 Into the shedding of “ too soft a tear.”

IX

TO A FRIEND

ON THE BANKS OF THE DERWENT

PASTOR and Patriot !—at whose bidding rise
 These modest walls, amid a flock that need,
 For one who comes to watch them and to feed,
 A fixed Abode—keep down presageful sighs.
 Threats, which the unthinking only can despise,
 Perplex the Church ; but be thou firm,—be true
 To thy first hope, and this good work pursue,
 Poor as thou art. A welcome sacrifice
 Dost Thou prepare, whose sign will be the smoke
 Of thy new hearth : and sooner shall its wreaths,
 Mounting while earth her morning incense breathes,
 From wandering fiends of air receive a yoke,

And straightway cease to aspire, than God disdain
This humble tribute as ill-timed or vain.

X

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

LANDING AT THE MOUTH OF THE DERWENT, WORKINGTON

DEAR to the Loves, and to the Graces vowed,
The Queen drew back the wimple that she wore ;
And to the throng, that on the Cumbrian shore
Her landing hailed, how touchingly she bowed !
And like a Star (that, from a heavy cloud
Of pine-tree foliage poised in air, forth darts,
When a soft summer gale at evening parts
The gloom that did its loveliness enshroud)
She smiled ; but Time, the old Saturnian seer,
Sighed on the wing as her foot pressed the strand,
With step prelude to a long array
Of woes and degradations hand in hand—
Weeping captivity, and shuddering fear
Stilled by the ensanguined block of Fotheringay !

XI

STANZAS SUGGESTED IN A STEAMBOAT OFF SAINT BEES'
HEAD, ON THE COAST OF CUMBERLAND

IF Life were slumber on a bed of down,
Toil unimposed, vicissitude unknown,
Sad were our lot : no hunter of the hare
Exults like him whose javelin from the lair
Has roused the lion ; no one plucks the rose,
Whose proffered beauty in safe shelter blows
'Mid a trim garden's summer luxuries,
With joy like his who climbs, on hands and knees,
For some rare plant, yon Headland of St. Bees.

This independence upon oar and sail,
This new indifference to breeze or gale,
This straight-lined progress, furrowing a flat lea,
And regular as if locked in certainty—
Depress the hours. Up, Spirit of the storm !
That Courage may find something to perform ;
That Fortitude, whose blood disdains to freeze
At Danger's bidding, may confront the seas,
Firm as the towering Headlands of St. Bees.

Dread cliff of Baruth ! *that* wild wish may sleep
Bold as if men and creatures of the Deep

Breathed the same element ; too many wrecks
 Have struck thy sides, too many ghastly decks
 Hast thou looked down upon, that such a thought
 Should here be welcome, and in verse enwrought :
 With thy stern aspect better far agrees
 Utterance of thanks that we have past with ease,
 As millions thus shall do, the Headlands of St. Bees.

Yet, while each useful Art augments her store,
 What boots the gain if Nature should lose more ?
 And Wisdom, as she holds a Christian place
 In man's intelligence sublimed by grace ?
 When Bega sought of yore the Cumbrian coast,
 Tempestuous winds her holy errand crossed :
 She knelt in prayer—the waves their wrath appease ;
 And, from her vow well weighed in Heaven's decrees,
 Rose, where she touched the strand, the Chantry of St. Bees.

“ Cruel of heart were they, bloody of hand,”
 Who in these Wilds then struggled for command ;
 The strong were merciless, without hope the weak ;
 Till this bright Stranger came, fair as daybreak,
 And as a cresset true that darts its length
 Of beamy lustre from a tower of strength ;
 Guiding the mariner through troubled seas,
 And cheering oft his peaceful reveries,
 Like the fixed Light that crowns yon Headland of St. Bees.

To aid the Votaress, miracles believed
 Wrought in men's minds, like miracles achieved ;
 So piety took root ; and Song might tell
 What humanising virtues near her cell
 Sprang up, and spread their fragrance wide around ;
 How savage bosoms melted at the sound
 Of gospel-truth enchained in harmonies
 Wafted o'er waves, or creeping through close trees,
 From her religious Mansion of St. Bees.

When her sweet Voice, that instrument of love,
 Was glorified, and took its place, above
 The silent stars, among the angelic quire,
 Her chantry blazed with sacrilegious fire,
 And perished utterly ; but her good deeds
 Had sown the spot, that witnessed them, with seeds
 Which lay in earth expectant, till a breeze
 With quickening impulse answered their mute pleas,
 And lo ! a *statelier* pile, the Abbey of St. Bees.

There are the naked clothed, the hungry fed ;
And Charity extendeth to the dead
Her intercessions made for the soul's rest
Of tardy penitents ; or for the best
Among the good (when love might else have slept,
Sickened, or died) in pious memory kept.
Thanks to the austere and simple Devotees,
Who, to that service bound by venial fees,
Keep watch before the altars of St. Bees.

Are not, in sooth, their Requiem's sacred ties
Woven out of passion's sharpest agonies,
Subdued, composed, and formalised by art,
To fix a wiser sorrow in the heart ?
The prayer for them whose hour is past away
Says to the Living, profit while ye may !
A little part, and that the worst, he sees
Who thinks that priestly cunning holds the keys
That best unlock the secrets of St. Bees.

Conscience, the timid being's inmost light,
Hope of the dawn and solace of the night,
Cheers these Recluses with a steady ray
In many an hour when judgment goes astray.
Ah ! scorn not hastily their rule who try
Earth to despise, and flesh to mortify ;
Consume with zeal, in winged ecstasies
Of prayer and praise forget their rosaries,
Nor hear the loudest surges of St. Bees.

Yet none so prompt to succour and protect
The forlorn traveller, or sailor wrecked
On the bare coast ; nor do they grudge the boon
Which staff and cockle hat and sandal shoon
Claim for the pilgrim : and, though chidings sharp
May sometimes greet the strolling minstrel's harp,
It is not then when, swept with sportive ease,
It charms a feast-day throng of all degrees,
Brightening the archway of revered St. Bees.

How did the cliffs and echoing hills rejoice
What time the Benedictine Brethren's voice,
Imploring, or commanding with meet pride,
Summoned the Chiefs to lay their feuds aside,
And under one blest ensign serve the Lord
In Palestine. Advance, indignant Sword !
Flaming till thou from Panym hands release

That Tomb, dread centre of all sanctities
Nursed in the quiet Abbey of St. Bees

But look we now to them whose minds from far
Follow the fortunes which they may not share.
While in Judea Fancy loves to roam,
She helps to make a Holy-land at home :
The Star of Bethlehem from its sphere invites
To sound the crystal depth of maiden rights ;
And wedded Life, through scriptural mysteries,
Heavenward ascends with all her charities,
Taught by the hooded Celibates of St. Bees.

Nor be it e'er forgotten how, by skill
Of cloistered Architects, free their souls to fill
With love of God, throughout the Land were raised
Churches, on whose symbolic beauty gazed
Peasant and mail-clad Chief with pious awe ;
As at this day men seeing what they saw,
Or the bare wreck of faith's solemnities,
Aspire to more than earthly destinies ;
Witness yon Pile that greets us from St. Bees.

Yet more ; around those Churches, gathered Towns .
Safe from the feudal Castle's haughty frowns ;
Peaceful abodes, where Justice might uphold
Her scales with even hand, and culture mould
The heart to pity, train the mind in care
For rules of life, sound as the Time could bear.
Nor dost thou fail, thro' abject love of ease,
Or hindrance raised by sordid purposes,
To bear thy part in this good work, St. Bees.

Who with the ploughshare clove the barren moors,
And to green meadows changed the swampy shores ?
Thinned the rank woods ; and for the cheerful grange
Made room, where wolf and boar were used to range ?
Who taught, and showed by deeds, that gentler chains
Should bind the vassal to his lord's domains ?—
The thoughtful Monks, intent their God to please,
For Christ's dear sake, by human sympathies
Poured from the bosom of thy Church, St. Bees !

But all availed not ; by a mandate given
Through lawless will the Brotherhood was driven
Forth from their cells ; their ancient House laid low
In Reformation's sweeping overthrow.

But now once more the local Heart revives,
 The inextinguishable Spirit strives.
 Oh may that Power who hushed the stormy seas,
 And cleared a way for the first Votaries,
 Prosper the new-born College of St. Bees !

Alas ! the Genius of our age, from Schools
 Less humble, draws her lessons, aims, and rules.
 To Prowess guided by her insight keen
 Matter and Spirit are as one Machine ;
 Boastful Idolatress of formal skill
 She in her own would merge the eternal will :
 Better, if Reason's triumphs match with these,
 Her flight before the bold credulities
 That furthered the first teaching of St. Bees.

XII

IN THE CHANNEL, BETWEEN THE COAST OF CUMBERLAND
 AND THE ISLE OF MAN

RANGING the heights of Scawfell or Blackcomb,
 In his lone course the Shepherd oft will pause,
 And strive to fathom the mysterious laws
 By which the clouds, arrayed in light or gloom,
 On Mona settle, and the shapes assume
 Of all her peaks and ridges. What he draws
 From sense, faith, reason, fancy, of the cause,
 He will take with him to the silent tomb.
 Or, by his fire, a child upon his knee,
 Haply the untaught Philosopher may speak
 Of the strange sight, nor hide his theory
 That satisfies the simple and the meek,
 Blest in their pious ignorance, though weak
 To cope with Sages undevoutly free.

XIII

AT SEA OFF THE ISLE OF MAN

BOLD words affirmed, in days when faith was strong
 And doubts and scruples seldom teased the brain,
 That no adventurer's bark had power to gain
 These shores if he approached them bent on wrong ;
 For, suddenly up-conjured from the Main,
 Mists rose to hide the Land—that search, though long
 And eager, might be still pursued in vain.
 O Fancy, what an age was *that* for song !
 That age, when not by *laws* inanimate,
 As men believed, the waters were impelled,

The air controlled, the stars their courses held ;
 But element and orb on *acts* did wait
 Of *Powers* endued with visible form, instinct
 With will, and to their work by passion linked.

XIV

"DESIRE WE PAST ILLUSIONS TO RECALL?"

DESIRE we past illusions to recall?
 To reinstate wild Fancy, would we hide
 Truths whose thick veil Science has drawn aside?
 No,—let this Age, high as she may, instal
 In her esteem the thirst that wrought man's fall,
 The universe is infinitely wide ;
 And conquering Reason, if self-glorified,
 Can nowhere move uncrossed by some new wall
 Or gulf of mystery, which thou alone,
 Imaginative Faith ! canst overleap,
 In progress toward the fount of Love,—the throne
 Of Power whose ministers the records keep
 Of periods fixed, and laws established, less
 Flesh to exalt than prove its nothingness.

XV

ON ENTERING DOUGLAS BAY, ISLE OF MAN

"Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori."

THE feudal Keep, the bastions of Cohorn,
 Even when they rose to check or to repel
 Tides of aggressive war, oft served as well
 Greedy ambition, armed to treat with scorn
 Just limits ; but yon Tower, whose smiles adorn
 This perilous bay, stands clear of all offence ;
 Blest work it is of love and innocence,
 A Tower of refuge built for the else forlorn.
 Spare it, ye waves, and lift the mariner,
 Struggling for life, into its saving arms !
 Spare, too, the human helpers ! Do they stir
 'Mid your fierce shock like men afraid to die ?
 No ; their dread service nerves the heart it warms,
 And they are led by noble HILLARY.

XVI

BY THE SEASHORE, ISLE OF MAN

WHY stand we gazing on the sparkling Brine,
 With wonder smit by its transparency,
 And all-enraptured with its purity ?—
 Because the unstained, the clear, the crystalline,

Have ever in them something of benign ;
 Whether in gem, in water, or in sky,
 A sleeping infant's brow, or wakeful eye
 Of a young maiden, only not divine.
 Scarcely the hand forbears to dip its palm
 For beverage drawn as from a mountain-well ;
 Temptation centres in the liquid Calm ;
 Our daily raiment seems no obstacle
 To instantaneous plunging in, deep Sea !
 And revelling in long embrace with thee.¹

XVII

ISLE OF MAN²

A YOUTH too certain of his power to wade
 On the smooth bottom of this clear bright sea,
 To sight so shallow, with a bather's glee
 Leapt from this rock, and but for timely aid
 He, by the alluring element betrayed,
 Had perished. Then might Sea-nymphs (and with sighs
 Of self-reproach) have chanted elegies
 Bewailing his sad fate, when he was laid
 In peaceful earth : for, doubtless, he was frank,
 Utterly in himself devoid of guile ;
 Knew not the double-dealing of a smile ;
 Nor aught that makes men's promises a blank,
 Or deadly snare : and He survives to bless
 The Power that saved him in his strange distress.

XVIII

ISLE OF MAN

DID pangs of grief for lenient time too keen,
 Grief that devouring waves had caused, or guilt
 Which they had witnessed—sway the man who built
 This Homestead, placed where nothing could be seen,
 Nought heard, of ocean troubled or serene ?
 A tired Ship-soldier on paternal land,
 That o'er the channel holds august command,
 The dwelling raised,—a veteran Marine.
 He, in disgust, turned from the neighbouring sea
 To shun the memory of a listless life

¹ The sea-water on the coast of the Isle of Man is singularly pure and beautiful.

² My son William is here the person alluded to as saving the life of the youth, and the circumstances were as mentioned in the Sonnet.

That hung between two callings. May no strife
 More hurtful here beset him, doomed though free,
 Self-doomed, to worse inaction, till his eye
 Shrink from the daily sight of earth and sky !

XIX¹

(BY A RETIRED MARINER, H. H.)

XX

AT BALA-SALA, ISLE OF MAN²

BROKEN in fortune, but in mind entire
 And sound in principle, I seek repose
 Where ancient trees this convent-pile enclose,
 In ruin beautiful. When vain desire
 Intrudes on peace, I pray the eternal Sire
 To cast a soul-subduing shade on me,
 A grey-haired, pensive, thankful Refugee ;
 A shade—but with some sparks of heavenly fire
 Once to these cells vouchsafed. And when I note
 The old Tower's brow yellowed as with the beams
 Of sunset ever there, albeit streams
 Of stormy weather-stains that semblance wrought,
 I thank the silent Monitor, and say
 "Shine so, my aged brow, at all hours of the day !"

XXI

TYNWALD HILL³

ONCE on the top of Tynwald's formal mound
 (Still marked with green turf circles narrowing
 Stage above stage) would sit this Island's King,
 The laws to promulgate, enrobed and crowned :
 While, compassing the little mount around,
 Degrees and Orders stood, each under each :
 Now, like to things within fate's easiest reach
 The power is merged, the pomp a grave has found.

¹ See Appendix C, p. 696.

² Supposed to be written by a friend (Mr. Cookson) who died there a few years after.

³ Mr. Robinson and I walked the greater part of the way from Castle-town to Piel, and stopped some time at Tynwald Hill. One of my companions was an elderly man, who in a muddy way (for he was tipsy) explained and answered, as far as he could, my enquiries about this place and the ceremonies held here.

Off with yon cloud, old Snafell! that thine eye
 Over three Realms may take its widest range;
 And let, for them, thy fountains utter strange
 Voices, thy winds break forth in prophecy,
 If the whole State must suffer mortal change
 Like Mona's miniature of sovereignty.

XXII

DESPOND who will—I heard a voice exclaim,
 "Though fierce the assault, and shattered the defence,
 It cannot be that Britain's social frame,
 The glorious work of time and providence,
 Before a flying season's rash pretence,
 Should fall; that She, whose virtue put to shame,
 When Europe prostrate lay, the Conqueror's aim,
 Should perish, self-subverted. Black and dense
 The cloud is; but brings *that* a day of doom
 To Liberty? Her sun is up the while,
 That orb whose beams round Saxon Alfred shone:
 Then laugh, ye innocent Vales! ye Streams, sweep on,
 Nor let one billow of our heaven-blest Isle
 Toss in the fanning wind a humbler plume."

XXIII

IN THE FRITH OF CLYDE, AILSA CRAG¹

DURING AN ECLIPSE OF THE SUN, JULY 17

SINCE risen from ocean, ocean to defy,
 Appeared the crag of Ailsa, ne'er did morn
 With gleaming lights more gracefully adorn
 His sides, or wreath with mist his forehead high
 Now, faintly darkening with the sun's eclipse,
 Still is he seen, in lone sublimity,
 Towering above the sea and little ships;
 For dwarfs the tallest seem while sailing by,
 Each for her haven; with her freight of Care,
 Pleasure, or Grief, and Toil that seldom looks

¹ The morning of the eclipse was exquisitely beautiful while we passed the Crag as described in the Sonnet. On the deck of the steam-boat were several persons of the poor and labouring class, and I could not but be struck by their cheerful talk with each other, while not one of them seemed to notice the magnificent objects with which we were surrounded; and even the phenomenon of the eclipse attracted but little of their attention.

Into the secret of to-morrow's fare ;
 Though poor, yet rich, without the wealth of books,
 Or aught that watchful Love to Nature owes
 For her mute Powers, fixed Forms, or transient Shows.

XXIV

ON THE FRITH OF CLYDE ¹

IN A STEAMBOAT

ARRAN ! a single-crested Teneriffe,
 A St. Helena next—in shape and hue,
 Varying her crowded peaks and ridges blue ;
 Who but must covet a cloud-seat, or skiff
 Built for the air, or wingèd Hippogriff ?
 That he might fly, where no one could pursue,
 From this dull Monster and her sooty crew ;
 And, as a God, light on thy topmost cliff.
 Impotent wish ! which reason would despise
 If the mind knew no union of extremes,
 No natural bond between the boldest schemes,
 Ambition frames, and heart-humilities.
 Beneath stern mountains many a soft vale lies,
 And lofty springs give birth to lowly streams.

XXV

ON REVISITING DUNOLLY CASTLE

THE captive Bird was gone ;—to cliff or moor
 Perchance had flown, delivered by the storm ;
 Or he had pined, and sunk to feed the worm :
 Him found we not : but, climbing, a tall tower,
 There saw, impaved with rude fidelity
 Of art mosaic, in a roofless floor,
 An Eagle with stretched wings, but beamless eye—
 An Eagle that could neither wail nor soar.
 Effigy of the Vanished—(shall I dare
 To call thee so ?) or symbol of fierce deeds
 And of the towering courage which past times
 Rejoiced in—take, whate'er thou be, a share,
 Not undeserved, of the memorial rhymes
 That animate my way where'er it leads !

¹ The mountain outline on the north of this island, as seen from the Frith of Clyde, is much the finest I have ever noticed in Scotland or elsewhere.

XXVI

THE DUNOLLY EAGLE

NOT to the clouds, not to the cliff, he flew;
 But when a storm, on sea or mountain bred,
 Came and delivered him, alone he sped
 Into the castle-dungeon's darkest mew.
 Now, near his master's house in open view
 He dwells, and hears indignant tempests howl,
 Kennelled and chained. Ye tame domestic fowl,
 Beware of him! Thou, saucy cockatoo,
 Look to thy plumage and thy life!—The roe,
 Fleet as the west wind, is for *him* no quarry;
 Balanced in ether he will never tarry,
 Eyeing the sea's blue depths. Poor Bird! even so
 Doth man of brother man a creature make
 That clings to slavery for its own sad sake.

XXVII

WRITTEN IN A BLANK LEAF OF MACPHERSON'S OSSIAN¹

OFt have I caught, upon a fitful breeze,
 Fragments of far-off melodies,
 With ear not coveting the whole,
 A part so charmed the pensive soul.
 While a dark storm before my sight
 Was yielding, on a mountain height
 Loose vapours have I watched, that won
 Prismatic colours from the sun;
 Nor felt a wish that heaven would show
 The image of its perfect bow.
 What need, then, of these finished Strains?
 Away with counterfeit Remains!
 An abbey in its lone recess,
 A temple of the wilderness,
 Wrecks though they be, announce with feeling
 The majesty of honest dealing.
 Spirit of Ossian! if imbound
 In language thou may'st yet be found,
 If aught (intrusted to the pen
 Or floating on the tongues of men,

¹ The verses—

“Or strayed

From hope and promise, self-betrayed,”

were, I am sorry to say, suggested from apprehensions of the fate of my friend, H. C., the subject of the verses addressed to “H. C. when six years old.” The piece to “Memory” arose out of similar feelings.

Albeit shattered and impaired)
Subsist thy dignity to guard,
In concert with memorial claim
Of old grey stone, and high-born name
That cleaves to rock or pillared cave
Where moans the blast, or beats the wave,
Let Truth, stern arbitress of all,
Interpret that Original,
And for presumptuous wrongs atone ;—
Authentic words be given, or none !
Time is not blind ;—yet He, who spares
Pyramid pointing to the stars,
Hath preyed with ruthless appetite
On all that marked the primal flight
Of the poetic ecstasy
Into the land of mystery.
No tongue is able to rehearse
One measure, Orpheus ! of thy verse ;
Musæus, stationed with his lyre
Supreme among the Elysian quire,
Is, for the dwellers upon earth,
Mute as a lark ere morning's birth.
Why grieve for these, though past away
The music, and extinct the lay ?
When thousands, by severer doom,
Full early to the silent tomb
Have sunk, at Nature's call ; or strayed
From hope and promise, self-betrayed ;
The garland withering on their brows ;
Stung with remorse for broken vows ;
Frantic—else how might they rejoice ?
And friendless, by their own sad choice !
Hail, Bards of mightier grasp ! on you
I chiefly call, the chosen Few,
Who cast not off the acknowledged guide,
Who faltered not, nor turned aside ;
Whose lofty genius could survive
Privation, under sorrow thrive ;
In whom the fiery Muse revered
The symbol of a snow-white beard,
Bedewed with meditative tears
Dropped from the lenient cloud of years.
Brothers in soul ! though distant times
Produced you nursed in various climes,
Ye, when the orb of life had waned,

A plenitude of love retained :
 Hence, while in you each sad regret
 By corresponding hope was met,
 Ye lingered among human kind,
 Sweet voices for the passing wind,
 Departing sunbeams, loth to stop,
 Though smiling on the last hill top !
 Such to the tender-hearted maid
 Even ere her joys begin to fade ;
 Such, haply, to the rugged chief
 By fortune crushed, or tamed by grief ;
 Appears, on Morven's lonely shore,
 Dim-gleaming through imperfect lore,
 The Son of Fingal ; such was blind
 Mæonides of ampler mind ;
 Such Milton, to the fountain head
 Of glory by Urania led !

XXVIII

CAVE OF STAFFA

I

WE saw, but surely, in the motley crowd,
 Not One of us has felt the far-famed sight ;
 How *could* we feel it ? each the other's blight,
 Hurried and hurrying, volatile and loud.
 O for those motions only that invite
 The Ghost of Fingal to his tuneful Cave
 By the breeze entered, and wave after wave
 Softly embosoming the timid light !
 And by *one* Votary who at will might stand
 Gazing and take into his mind and heart,
 With undistracted reverence, the effect
 Of those proportions where the almighty hand
 That made the worlds, the sovereign Architect,
 Has deigned to work as if with human Art !

XXIX

II

AFTER THE CROWD HAD DEPARTED

THANKS for the lessons of this Spot—fit school
 For the presumptuous thoughts that would assign
 Mechanic laws to agency divine ;
 And, measuring heaven by earth, would overrule
 Infinite Power. The pillared vestibule,
 Expanding yet precise, the roof embowed,

Might seem designed to humble man, when proud
 Of his best workmanship by plan and tool.
 Down-bearing with his whole Atlantic weight
 Of tide and tempest on the Structure's base,
 And flashing to that Structure's topmost height,
 Ocean has proved its strength, and of its grace
 In calms is conscious, finding for his freight
 Of softest music some responsive place.

XXX

III

YE shadowy Beings, that have rights and claims
 In every cell of Fingal's mystic Grot,
 Where are ye? Driven or venturing to the spot,
 Our fathers glimpses caught of your thin Frames,
 And, by your mien and bearing knew your names ;
 And they could hear *his* ghostly song who trod
 Earth, till the flesh lay on him like a load,
 While he struck his desolate harp without hopes or aims.
 Vanished ye are, but subject to recall ;
 Why keep *we* else the instincts whose dread law
 Ruled here of yore, till what men felt they saw,
 Not by black arts but magic natural !
 If eyes be still sworn vassals of belief,
 Yon light shapes forth a Bard, that shade a Chief.

XXXI

FLOWERS ON THE TOP OF THE PILLARS AT THE ENTRANCE
 OF THE CAVE

HOPE smiled when your nativity was cast,
 Children of Summer ! Ye fresh Flowers that brave
 What Summer here escapes not, the fierce wave,
 And whole artillery of the western blast,
 Battering the Temple's front, its long-drawn nave
 Smiting, as if each moment were their last.
 But ye, bright Flowers on frieze and architrave
 Survive, and once again the Pile stands fast :
 Calm as the Universe, from specular towers
 Of heaven contemplated by Spirits pure
 With mute astonishment, it stands sustained
 Through every part in symmetry, to endure,
 Unhurt, the assault of Time with all his hours,
 As the supreme Artificer ordained.

XXXII

IONA

ON to Iona!—What can she afford
 To *us* save matter for a thoughtful sigh,
 Heaved over ruin with stability
 In urgent contrast? To diffuse the WORD
 (Thy Paramount, mighty Nature! and Time's Lord)
 Her Temples rose, 'mid pagan gloom; but why,
 Even for a moment, has our verse deplored
 Their wrongs, since they fulfilled their destiny?
 And when, subjected to a common doom
 Of mutability, those far-famed Piles
 Shall disappear from both the sister Isles,
 Iona's Saints, forgetting not past days,
 Garlands shall wear of amaranthine bloom,
 While heaven's vast sea of voices chants their praise.

XXXIII

IONA

UPON LANDING

How sad a welcome! To each voyager
 Some ragged child holds up for sale a store
 Of wave-worn pebbles, pleading on the shore
 Where once came monk and nun with gentle stir,
 Blessings to give, news ask, or suit prefer.
 Yet is yon neat trim church a grateful speck
 Of novelty amid the sacred wreck
 Strewn far and wide. Think, proud Philosopher!
 Fallen though she be, this Glory of the west,
 Still on her sons, the beams of mercy shine;
 And "hopes, perhaps more heavenly bright than thine,
 A grace by thee unsought and unpossessed,
 A faith more fixed, a rapture more divine,
 Shall gild their passage to eternal rest."

XXXIV

THE BLACK STONES OF IONA¹

HERE on their knees men swore: the stones were black,
 Black in the people's minds and words, yet they
 Were at that time, as now, in colour grey.
 But what is colour, if upon the rack
 Of conscience souls are placed by deeds that lack
 Concord with oaths? What differ night and day

¹ See Martin's *Voyage among the Western Isles*.

Then, when before the Perjured on his way
 Hell opens, and the heavens in vengeance crack
 Above his head uplifted in vain prayer
 To Saint, or Fiend, or to the Godhead whom
 He had insulted—Peasant, King, or Thane?
 Fly where the culprit may, guilt meets a doom;
 And, from invisible worlds at need laid bare,
 Come links for social order's awful chain.

XXXV

"HOMEWARD WE TURN"

HOMEWARD we turn. Isle of Columba's Cell,
 Where Christian piety's soul-cheering spark
 (Kindled from Heaven between the light and dark
 Of time) shone like the morning-star, farewell!—
 And fare thee well, to Fancy visible,
 Remote St. Kilda, lone and loved sea-mark
 For many a voyage made in her swift bark,
 When with more hues than in the rainbow dwell
 Thou a mysterious intercourse dost hold,
 Extracting from clear skies and air serene,
 And out of sun-bright waves, a lucid veil,
 That thickens, spreads, and, mingling fold with fold,
 Makes known, when thou no longer canst be seen,
 Thy whereabouts, to warn the approaching sail.

XXXVI

GREENOCK

Per me si va nella Città dolente.

WE have not passed into a doleful City,
 We who were led to-day down a grim dell,
 By some too boldly named "the Jaws of Hell:"
 Where be the wretched ones, the sights for pity?
 These crowded streets resound no plaintive ditty:—
 As from the hive where bees in summer dwell,
 Sorrow seems here excluded; and that knell,
 It neither damps the gay, nor checks the witty.
 Alas! too busy Rival of old Tyre,
 Whose merchants Princes were, whose decks were thrones;
 Soon may the punctual sea in vain respire
 To serve thy need, in union with that Clyde

Whose nursing current brawls o'er mossy stones,
The poor, the lonely, herdsman's joy and pride.

XXXVII

MOSGIEL

"THERE!" said a Stripling, pointing with meet pride
Towards a low roof with green trees half concealed,
"Is Mosgiel Farm; and that's the very field
Where Burns ploughed up the Daisy."¹ Far and wide
A plain below stretched seaward, while, descried
Above sea-clouds, the Peaks of Arran rose;
And, by that simple notice, the repose
Of earth, sky, sea, and air, was vivified.
Beneath "the random *field* of clod or stone"
Myriads of daisies have shone forth in flower
Near the lark's nest, and in their natural hour
Have passed away; less happy than the One
That, by the unwilling ploughshare, died to prove
The tender charm of poetry and love.

XXXVIII

THE RIVER EDEN, CUMBERLAND²

EDEN! till now thy beauty had I viewed
By glimpses only, and confess with shame
That verse of mine, whate'er its varying mood,
Repeats but once the sound of thy sweet name:
Yet fetched from Paradise that honour came,
Rightfully borne; for Nature gives thee flowers
That have no rivals among British bowers;
And thy bold rocks are worthy of their fame.
Measuring thy course, fair Stream! at length I pay
To my life's neighbour dues of neighbourhood;
But I have traced thee on thy winding way
With pleasure sometimes by this thought restrained—
For things far off we toil, while many a good
Not sought, because too near, is never gained.

¹ Mosgiel was thus pointed out to me by a young man on the top of the coach on my way from Glasgow to Kilmarnock.

² "Nature gives thee flowers that have no rivals among British bowers." This can scarcely be true to the letter; but, without stretching the point at all, I can say that the soil and air appear more congenial with many upon the banks of this river than I have observed in any other parts of Great Britain.

XXXIX

MONUMENT OF MRS. HOWARD¹

By Nollekens

IN WETHERAL CHURCH, NEAR CORBY, ON THE BANKS OF
THE EDEN

STRETCHED on the dying Mother's lap, lies dead
 Her new-born Babe ; dire ending of bright hope !
 But Sculpture here, with the divinest scope
 Of luminous faith, heavenward hath raised that head
 So patiently ; and through one hand has spread
 A touch so tender for the insensate Child—
 (Earth's lingering love to parting reconciled,
 Brief parting, for the spirit is all but fled)—
 That we, who contemplate the turns of life
 Through this still medium, are consoled and cheered ;
 Feel with the Mother, think the severed Wife
 Is less to be lamented than revered ;
 And own that Art, triumphant over strife
 And pain, hath powers to Eternity endeared.

XL

SUGGESTED BY THE FOREGOING

TRANQUILLITY ! the sovereign aim wert thou
 In heathen schools of philosophic lore ;
 Heart-stricken by stern destiny of yore
 The Tragic Muse thee served with thoughtful vow ;
 And what of hope Elysium could allow
 Was fondly seized by Sculpture, to restore
 Peace to the Mourner. But when He who wore
 The crown of thorns around his bleeding brow
 Warmed our sad being with celestial light,
Then Arts which still had drawn a softening grace
 From shadowy fountains of the Infinite,
 Communed with that Idea face to face :
 And move around it now as planets run,
 Each in its orbit round the central Sun.

¹ Before this monument was put up in the Church at Wetheral, I saw it in the sculptor's studio. Nollekens, who, by the bye, was a strange and grotesque figure that interfered much with one's admiration of his works, showed me at the same time the various models in clay which he had made, one after another, of the Mother and her Infant : the improvement on each was surprising ; and how so much grace, beauty, and tenderness had come out of such a head I was sadly puzzled to conceive.

XLI

NUNNERY¹

THE floods are roused, and will not soon be weary;
 Down from the Pennine Alps how fiercely sweeps
 CROGLIN, the stately Eden's tributary!
 He raves, or through some moody passage creeps
 Plotting new mischief—out again he leaps
 Into broad light, and sends, through regions airy,
 That voice which soothed the Nuns while on the steep
 They knelt in prayer, or sang to blissful Mary.
 That union ceased: then, cleaving easy walks
 Through crags, and smoothing paths beset with danger,
 Came studious Taste; and many a pensive stranger
 Dreams on the banks, and to the river talks.
 What change shall happen next to Nunnery Dell?
 Canal, and Viaduct, and Railway, tell!

XLII

STEAMBOATS, VIADUCTS, AND RAILWAYS

MOTIONS and Means, on land and sea at war
 With old poetic feeling, not for this,
 Shall ye, by Poets even, be judged amiss!
 Nor shall your presence, howsoe'er it mar
 The loveliness of Nature, prove a bar
 To the Mind's gaining that prophetic sense
 Of future change, that point of vision, whence
 May be discovered what in soul ye are.
 In spite of all that beauty may disown
 In your harsh features, Nature doth embrace
 Her lawful offspring in Man's art; and Time,
 Pleased with your triumphs o'er his brother Space,
 Accepts from your bold hands the proffered crown
 Of hope, and smiles on you with cheer sublime

XLIII

THE MONUMENT COMMONLY CALLED LONG MEG AND HER
 DAUGHTERS, NEAR THE RIVER EDEN

A WEIGHT of awe, not easy to be borne,
 Fell suddenly upon my Spirit—cast

¹ I became acquainted with the walks of Nunnery when a boy: they are within easy reach of a day's pleasant excursion from the town of Penrith, where I used to pass my summer holidays under the roof of my maternal Grandfather. The place is well worth visiting; though, within these few years, its privacy, and therefore the pleasure which the scene is so well fitted to give, has been injuriously affected by walks cut in the rocks on that side the stream which had been left in its natural state.

From the dread bosom of the unknown past,
 When first I saw that family forlorn.
 Speak Thou, whose massy strength and stature scorn
 The power of years—pre-eminent, and placed
 Apart, to overlook the circle vast—
 Speak, Giant-mother ! tell it to the Morn
 While she dispels the cumbrous shades of Night ;
 Let the Moon hear, emerging from a cloud ;
 At whose behest uprose on British ground
 That Sisterhood, in hieroglyphic round
 Forth-shadowing, some have deemed, the infinite
 The inviolable God, that tames the proud !

XLIV

LOWTHER ¹

LOWTHER ! in thy majestic Pile are seen
 Cathedral pomp and grace, in apt accord
 With the baronial castle's sterner mien ;
 Union significant of God adored,
 And charters won and guarded by the sword
 Of ancient honour ; whence that goodly state
 Of polity which wise men venerate,
 And will maintain, if God his help afford.
 Hourly the democratic torrent swells ;
 For airy promises and hopes suborned
 The strength of backward-looking thoughts is scorned.
 Fall if ye must, ye Towers and Pinnacles,
 With what ye symbolise ; authentic Story
 Will say, Ye disappeared with England's Glory !

XLV

TO THE EARL OF LONSDALE

" Magistratus indicat virum "

LONSDALE ! it were unworthy of a Guest,
 Whose heart with gratitude to thee inclines,
 If he should speak, by fancy touched, of signs
 On thy Abode harmoniously imprest,
 Yet be unmoved with wishes to attest
 How in thy mind and moral frame agree
 Fortitude, and that Christian Charity
 Which, filling, consecrates the human breast.

¹ " Cathedral pomp." It may be questioned whether this union was in the contemplation of the artist when he planned the edifice. However this might be, a poet may be excused for taking the view of the subject presented in this Sonnet.

And if the Motto on thy 'scutcheon teach
 With truth, "THE MAGISTRACY SHOWS THE MAN;"
That searching test thy public course has stood;
 As will be owned alike by bad and good,
 Soon as the measuring of life's little span
 Shall place thy virtues out of Envy's reach.

XLVI

THE SOMNAMBULIST

List, ye who pass by Lyulph's Tower
 At eve; how softly then
 Doth Aira-force, that torrent hoarse,
 Speak from the woody glen!
 Fit music for a solemn vale!
 And holier seems the ground
 To him who catches on the gale
 The spirit of a mournful tale,
 Embodied in the sound.

Not far from that fair site whereon
 The Pleasure-house is reared,
 As story says, in antique days
 A stern-browed house appeared
 Foil to a Jewel rich in light
 There set, and guarded well;
 Cage for a Bird of plumage bright,
 Sweet-voiced, nor wishing for a flight
 Beyond her native dell.

To win this bright Bird from her cage,
 To make this Gem their own,
 Came Barons bold, with store of gold,
 And Knights of high renown;
 But one She prized, and only one;
 Sir Eglamore was he;
 Full happy season, when was known,
 Ye Dales and Hills! to you alone
 Their mutual loyalty—

Known chiefly, Aira! to thy glen,
 'Thy brook, and bowers of holly;
 Where Passion caught what Nature taught,
 That all but love is folly;
 Where Fact with Fancy stooped to play;
 Doubt came not, nor regret—

To trouble hours that winged their way,
As if through an immortal day
Whose sun could never set.

But in old times Love dwelt not long
Sequestered with repose ;
Best throve the fire of chaste desire,
Fanned by the breath of foes.
“ A conquering lance is beauty’s test,
And proves the Lover true ; ”
So spake Sir Eglamore, and pressed
The drooping Emma to his breast,
And looked a blind adieu.

They parted.—Well with him it fared
Through wide-spread regions errant ;
A knight of proof in love’s behoof,
The thirst of fame his warrant :
And She her happiness can build
On woman’s quiet hours ;
Though faint, compared with spear and shield,
The solace beads and masses yield,
And needlework and flowers.

Yet blest was Emma when she heard
Her Champion’s praise recounted ;
Though brain would swim, and eyes grow dim,
And high her blushes mounted ;
Or when a bold heroic lay
She warbled from full heart ;
Delightful blossoms for the *May*
Of absence ! but they will not stay,
Born only to depart.

Hope wanes with her, while lustre fills
Whatever path he chooses ;
As if his orb, that owns no curb,
Received the light hers loses.
He comes not back ; an ampler space
Requires for nobler deeds ;
He ranges on from place to place,
Till of his doings is no trace,
But what her fancy breeds.

His fame may spread, but in the past
Her spirit finds its centre ;
Clear sight She has of what he was,
And that would now content her.

"Still is he my devoted Knight?"

The tear in answer flows;
Month falls on month with heavier weight;
Day sickens round her, and the night
Is empty of repose.

In sleep She sometimes walked abroad,
Deep sighs with quick words blending,
Like that pale Queen whose hands are seen
With fancied spots contending;
But *she* is innocent of blood,—
The moon is not more pure
That shines aloft, while through the wood
She thrids her way, the sounding Flood
Her melancholy lure!

While 'mid the fern-brake sleeps the doe
And owls alone are waking,
In white arrayed, glides on the Maid
The downward pathway taking,
That leads her to the torrent's side
And to a holly bower;
By whom on this still night descried?
By whom in that lone place espied?
By thee, Sir Eglamore!

A wandering Ghost, so thinks the Knight,
His coming step has thwarted,
Beneath the boughs that heard their vows,
Within whose shade they parted.
Hush, hush, the busy Sleeper see!
Perplexed her fingers seem,
As if they from the holly tree
Green twigs would pluck, as rapidly
Flung from her to the stream.

What means the Spectre? Why intent
To violate the Tree,
Thought Eglamore, by which I swore
Unfading constancy?
Here am I, and to-morrow's sun,
To her I left, shall prove
That bliss is ne'er so surely won
As when a circuit has been run
Of valour, truth, and love.

So from the spot whereon he stood,
He moved with stealthy pace;

And, drawing nigh, with his living eye,
He recognised the face ;
And whispers caught, and speeches small,
Some to the green-leaved tree,
Some muttered to the torrent-fall ;—
“ Roar on, and bring him with thy call ;
“ I heard, and so may He ! ”

Soul-shattered was the Knight, nor knew
If Emma's Ghost it were,
Or boding Shade, or if the Maid
Her very self stood there.
He touched ; what followed who shall tell ?
The soft touch snapped the thread
Of slumber—shrieking back she fell,
And the Stream whirled her down the dell
Along its foaming bed.

In plunged the Knight !—when on firm ground
The rescued Maiden lay,
Her eyes grew bright with blissful light,
Confusion passed away ;
She heard, ere to the throne of grace
Her faithful Spirit flew,
His voice—beheld his speaking face ;
And, dying, from his own embrace,
She felt that he was true.

So was he reconciled to life :
Brief words may speak the rest ;
Within the dell he built a cell,
And there was Sorrow's guest ;
In hermits' weeds repose he found,
From vain temptations free ;
Beside the torrent dwelling—bound
By one deep heart-controlling sound,
And awed to piety.

Wild stream of Aira, hold thy course,
Nor fear memorial lays,
Where clouds that spread in solemn shade
Are edged with golden rays !
Dear art thou to the light of heaven,
Though minister of sorrow ;
Sweet is thy voice at pensive even ;
And thou, in lovers' hearts forgiven,
Shalt take thy place with Yarrow !

Composed by the Seashore 579

XLVII

TO CORDELIA M——

HALLSTEADS, ULLSWATER

Not in the mines beyond the western main,
You say, Cordelia, was the metal sought,
Which a fine skill, of Indian growth, has wrought
Into this flexible yet faithful Chain;
Nor is it silver of romantic Spain
But from our loved Helvellyn's depths was brought,
Our own domestic mountain. Thing and thought
Mix strangely; trifles light, and partly vain,
Can prop, as you have learnt, our nobler being:
Yes, Lady, while about your neck is wound
(Your casual glance oft meeting) this bright cord,
What witchery, for pure gifts of inward seeing,
Lurks in it, Memory's Helper, Fancy's Lord,
For precious tremblings in your bosom found!

XLVIII

"MOST SWEET IT IS WITH UNUPLIFTED EYES"

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or none,
While a fair region round the traveller lies
Which he forbears again to look upon;
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse:
With Thought and Love companions of our way,
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,
The Mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

COMPOSED BY THE SEASHORE¹

WHAT mischief cleaves to unsubdued regret,
How fancy sickens by vague hopes beset;

¹ These lines were suggested during my residence under my Son's roof at Moresby, on the coast near Whitehaven, at the time when I was composing those verses among the "Evening Voluntaries" that have reference to the sea. It was in that neighbourhood I first became acquainted with the ocean and its appearances and movements. My infancy and early childhood were passed at Cockermouth, about eight miles from the coast, and I well remember that mysterious awe with which I used to listen to anything said about storms and shipwrecks.

580 'Not in the Lucid Intervals of Life'

How baffled projects on the spirit prey,
 And fruitless wishes eat the heart away,
 The Sailor knows ; he best, whose lot is cast
 On the relentless sea that holds him fast
 On chance dependent, and the fickle star
 Of power, through long and melancholy war.
 O sad it is, in sight of foreign shores,
 Daily to think on old familiar doors,
 Hearths loved in childhood, and ancestral floors ;
 Or, tossed about along a waste of foam,
 To ruminate on that delightful home
 Which with the dear Betrothèd *was* to come ;
 Or came and was and is, yet meets the eye
 Never but in the world of memory ;
 Or in a dream recalled, whose smoothest range
 Is crossed by knowledge, or by dread, of change,
 And if not so, whose perfect joy makes sleep
 A thing too bright for breathing man to keep.
 Hail to the virtues which that perilous life
 Extracts from Nature's elemental strife ;
 And welcome glory won in battles fought
 As bravely as the foe was keenly sought.
 But to each gallant Captain and his crew
 A less imperious sympathy is due,
 Such as my verse now yields, while moonbeams play
 On the mute sea in this unruffled bay ;
 Such as will promptly flow from every breast,
 Where good men, disappointed in the quest
 Of wealth and power and honours, long for rest ;
 Or, having known the splendours of success,
 Sigh for the obscurities of happiness.

(1833)

"NOT IN THE LUCID INTERVALS OF LIFE"¹

Nor in the lucid intervals of life
 That come but as a curse to party-strife ;
 Not in some hour when Pleasure with a sigh
 Of languor puts his rosy garland by ;
 Not in the breathing-times of that poor slave
 Who daily piles up wealth in Mammon's cave—
 Is Nature felt, or can be ; nor do words,
 Which practised talent readily affords,

¹ The lines following "nor do words" were written with Lord Byron's character, as a poet, before me, and that of others, his contemporaries, who wrote under like influences.

By the Side of Rydal Mere 581

Prove that her hand has touched responsive chords ;
Nor has her gentle beauty power to move
With genuine rapture and with fervent love
The soul of Genius, if he dare to take
Life's rule from passion craved for passion's sake ;
Untaught that meekness is the cherished bent
Of all the truly great and all the innocent.

But who is innocent ? By grace divine,
Not otherwise, O Nature ! we are thine,
Through good and evil thine, in just degree
Of rational and manly sympathy.
To all that Earth from pensive hearts is stealing,
And Heaven is now to gladdened eyes revealing,
Add every charm the Universe can show
Through every change its aspects undergo—
Care may be respited, but not repealed ;
No perfect cure grows on that bounded field.
Vain is the pleasure, a false calm the peace,
If He, through whom alone our conflicts cease,
Our virtuous hopes without relapse advance,
Come not to speed the Soul's deliverance ;
To the distempered Intellect refuse
His gracious help, or give what we abuse.

834)

BY THE SIDE OF RYDAL MERE

THE linnet's warble, sinking towards a close,
Hints to the thrush 'tis time for their repose ;
The shrill-voiced thrush is heedless, and again
The monitor revives his old sweet strain ;
But both will soon be mastered, and the copse
Be left as silent as the mountain-tops,
Ere some commanding star dismiss to rest
The throng of rocks, that now, from twig or nest,
(After a steady flight on home-bound wings,
And a last game of mazy hoverings
Around their ancient grove) with cawing noise
Disturb the liquid music's equipoise.

O Nightingale ! Who ever heard thy song
Might here be moved, till Fancy grows so strong
That listening sense is pardonably cheated
Where wood or stream by thee was never greeted.
Surely, from fairest spots of favoured lands,
Were not some gifts withheld by jealous hands,
This hour of deepening darkness here would be

582 'Soft as a Cloud is yon Blue Ridge

As a fresh morning for new harmony ;
 And lays as prompt would hail the dawn of Night :
 A *dawn* she has both beautiful and bright,
 When the East kindles with the full moon's light ;
 Not like the rising sun's impatient glow
 Dazzling the mountains, but an overflow
 Of solemn splendour, in mutation slow.

Wanderer by spring with gradual progress led,
 For sway profoundly felt as widely spread ;
 To king, to peasant, to rough sailor, dear,
 And to the soldier's trumpet-wearied ear ;
 How welcome wouldst thou be to this green Vale
 Fairer than Tempe ! Yet, sweet Nightingale !
 From the warm breeze that bears thee on, alight
 At will, and stay thy migratory flight ;
 Build, at thy choice, or sing, by pool or fount,
 Who shall complain, or call thee to account ?
 The wisest, happiest, of our kind are they
 That ever walk content with Nature's way,
 God's goodness—measuring bounty as it may ;
 For whom the gravest thought of what they miss,
 Chastening the fulness of a present bliss,
 Is with that wholesome office satisfied,
 While unrepining sadness is allied
 In thankful bosoms to a modest pride.

(1834)

"SOFT AS A CLOUD IS YON BLUE RIDGE"

SOFT as a cloud is yon blue Ridge—the Mere
 Seems firm as solid crystal, breathless, clear,
 And motionless ; and, to the gazer's eye,
 Deeper than ocean, in the immensity
 Of its vague mountains and unreal sky !
 But, from the process in that still retreat,
 Turn to minuter changes at our feet ;
 Observe how dewy Twilight has withdrawn
 The crowd of daisies from the shaven lawn,
 And has restored to view its tender green,
 That, while the sun rode high, was lost beneath their dazzling
 sheen.

—An emblem this of what the sober Hour
 Can do for minds disposed to feel its power !
 Thus oft, when we in vain have wished away
 The petty pleasures of the garish day,

‘The Leaves that Rustled’ 583

Meek eye shuts up the whole usurping host
(Unbashful dwarfs each glittering at his post)
And leaves the disencumbered spirit free
To reassume a staid simplicity.

’Tis well—but what are helps of time and place,
When wisdom stands in need of nature’s grace ;
Why do good thoughts, invoked or not, descend,
Like Angels from their bowers, our virtues to befriend ;
If yet To-morrow, unbelied, may say,
“I come to open out, for fresh display,
The elastic vanities of yesterday” ?

(1834)

“THE LEAVES THAT RUSTLED ON THIS
OAK-CROWNED HILL”¹

“Often, at the hour
When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
One voice—the solitary raven.”

THE leaves that rustled on this oak-crowned hill,
And sky that danced among those leaves, are still ;
Rest smooths the way for sleep ; in field and bower
Soft shades and dews have shed their blended power
On drooping eyelid and the closing flower ;
Sound is there none at which the faintest heart
Might leap, the weakest nerve of superstition start ;
Save when the Owlet’s unexpected scream
Pierces the ethereal vault ; and (’mid the gleam
Of unsubstantial imagery, the dream,
From the hushed vale’s realities, transferred
To the still lake) the imaginative Bird
Seems, ’mid inverted mountains, not unheard.

Grave Creature !—whether, while the moon shines bright
On thy wings opened wide for smoothest flight,
Thou art discovered in a roofless tower,
Rising from what may once have been a lady’s bower ;
Or spied where thou sitt’st moping in thy mew
At the dim centre of a churchyard yew ;
Or, from a rifted crag or ivy tod
Deep in a forest, thy secure abode,

¹ Composed by the side of Grasmere lake. The mountains that enclose the vale, especially towards Easdale, are most favourable to the reverberation of sound. There is a passage in the “Excursion,” towards the close of the fourth book, where the voice of the raven in flight is traced through the modifications it undergoes, as I have often heard it in that vale and others of this district

584 The Labourer's Noon-day Hymn

Thou giv'st, for pastime's sake, by shriek or shout,
A puzzling notice of thy whereabouts—
May the night never come, nor day be seen,
When I shall scorn thy voice or mock thy mien!

In classic ages men perceived a soul
Of sapience in thy aspect, headless Owl!
Thee Athens revered in the studious grove;
And, near the golden sceptre grasped by Jove,
His Eagle's favourite perch, while round him sate
The Gods revolving the decrees of Fate,
Thou, too, wert present at Minerva's side:—
Hark to that second larum!—far and wide
The elements have heard, and rock and cave replied.
(1834)

THE LABOURER'S NOON-DAY HYMN¹

Up to the throne of God is borne
The voice of praise at early morn,
And he accepts the punctual hymn
Sung as the light of day grows dim:
Nor will he turn his ear aside
From holy offerings at noontide:
Then here reposing let us raise
A song of gratitude and praise.
What though our burthen be not light,
We need not toil from morn to night;
The respite of the mid-day hour
Is in the thankful Creature's power.
Blest are the moments, doubly blest,
That, drawn from this one hour of rest,
Are with a ready heart bestowed
Upon the service of our God!
Each field is then a hallowed spot,
An altar is in each man's cot,
A church in every grove that spreads
Its living roof above our heads.
Look up to Heaven! the industrious Sun
Already half his race hath run;
He cannot halt nor go astray,
But our immortal Spirits may.

¹ Bishop Ken's Morning and Evening Hymns are, as they deserve to be, familiarly known. Many other hymns have also been written on the same subject; but, not being aware of any being designed for noon-day, I was induced to compose these verses.

Lord! since his rising in the East,
If we have faltered or transgressed,
Guide, from thy love's abundant source,
What yet remains of this day's course :
Help with thy grace, through life's short day,
Our upward and our downward way ;
And glorify for us the west,
When we shall sink to final rest.

(1834)

THE REDBREAST

SUGGESTED IN A WESTMORELAND COTTAGE¹

DRIVEN in by Autumn's sharpening air
From half-stripped woods and pastures bare,
Brisk Robin seeks a kindlier home :
Not like a beggar is he come,
But enters as a looked-for guest,
Confiding in his ruddy breast,
As if it were a natural shield
Charged with a blazon on the field,
Due to that good and pious deed
Of which we in the Ballad read.
But pensive fancies putting by,
And wild-wood sorrows, speedily
He plays the expert ventriloquist ;
And, caught by glimpses now—now missed,
Puzzles the listener with a doubt
If the soft voice he throws about
Comes from within doors or without !
Was ever such a sweet confusion,
Sustained by delicate illusion ?
He's at your elbow—to your feeling
The notes are from the floor or ceiling ;
And there's a riddle to be guessed,
Till you have marked his heaving chest,
And busy throat, whose sink and swell
Betray the Elf that loves to dwell
In Robin's bosom, as a chosen cell
Heart-pleased we smile upon the Bird
If seen, and with like pleasure stirred

¹ Written at Rydal Mount. All our cats having been banished the house, it was soon frequented by redbreasts. Two or three of them, when the window was open, would come in, particularly when Mrs. Wordsworth was breakfasting alone, and hop about the table picking up the crumbs.

Commend him, when he's only heard.
 But small and fugitive our gain
 Compared with *hers* who long hath lain,
 With languid limbs and patient head
 Reposing on a lone sick-bed ;
 Where now, she daily hears a strain
 That cheats her of too busy cares,
 Eases her pain, and helps her prayers.
 And who but this dear Bird beguiled
 The fever of that pale-faced Child ;
 Now cooling, with his passing wing,
 Her forehead, like a breeze of Spring :
 Recalling now, with descant soft
 Shed round her pillow from aloft,
 Sweet thoughts of angels hovering nigh,
 And the invisible sympathy
 Of "Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John,
 Blessing the bed she lies upon" ?¹
 And sometimes, just as listening ends
 In slumber, with the cadence blends
 A dream of that low-warbled hymn
 Which old folk, fondly pleased to trim
 Lamps of faith, now burning dim,
 Say that the Cherubs carved in stone,
 When clouds gave way at dead of night
 And the ancient church was filled with light,
 Used to sing in heavenly tone,
 Above and round the sacred places
 They guard, with wingèd baby-faces.
 Thrice happy Creature ! in all lands
 Nurtured by hospitable hands :
 Free entrance to this cot has he,
 Entrance and exit both *yet* free ;
 And, when the keen unruffled weather
 That thus brings man and bird together,
 Shall with its pleasantness be past,
 And casement closed and door made fast,
 To keep at bay the howling blast,
He needs not fear the season's rage,
 For the whole house is Robin's cage.

¹ The words—

"Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John,
 Bless the bed that I lie on,"

are part of a child's prayer, still in general use through the northern counties.

Whether the bird flit here or there,
 O'er table *lilt*, or perch on chair,
 Though some may frown and make a stir,
 To scare him as a trespasser,
 And he belike will flinch or start,
 Good friends he has to take his part ;
 One chiefly, who with voice and look
 Pleads for him from the chimney-nook,
 Where sits the Dame, and wears away
 Her long and vacant holiday ;
 With images about her heart,
 Reflected from the years gone by,
 On human nature's second infancy.
 (1834)

LINES¹

SUGGESTED BY A PORTRAIT FROM THE PENCIL OF
 F. STONE

BEGUILED into forgetfulness of care
 Due to the day's unfinished task ; of pen
 Or book regardless, and of that fair scene
 In Nature's prodigality displayed
 Before my window, oftentimes and long
 I gaze upon a Portrait whose mild gleam
 Of beauty never ceases to enrich
 The common light ; whose stillness charms the air,
 Or seems to charm it, into like repose ;
 Whose silence, for the pleasure of the ear,
 Surpasses sweetest music. There she sits
 With emblematic purity attired
 In a white vest, white as her marble neck
 Is, and the pillar of the throat would be
 But for the shadow by the drooping chin
 Cast into that recess—the tender shade,
 The shade and light, both there and everywhere,
 And through the very atmosphere she breathes,
 Broad, clear, and toned harmoniously, with skill
 That might from nature have been learnt in the hour

¹ This Portrait has hung for many years in our parlour sitting-room, and represents J. Q. as she was when a girl. The portrait is somewhat thinly painted, has much merit in tone and general effect: it is chiefly valuable, however, from the sentiment that pervades it. The anecdote of the saying of the Monk in sight of Titian's picture was told in this house by Mr. Wilkie, and was, I believe, first communicated to the public in this poem, the former portion of which I was composing at the time.

When the lone shepherd sees the morning spread
 Upon the mountains. Look at her, whoe'er
 Thou be that, kindling with a poet's soul,
 Hast loved the painter's true Promethean craft
 Intensely—from Imagination take
 The treasure,—what mine eyes behold, see thou,
 Even though the Atlantic ocean roll between.

A silver line, that runs from brow to crown
 And in the middle parts the braided hair,
 Just serves to show how delicate a soil
 The golden harvest grows in ; and those eyes,
 Soft and capacious as a cloudless sky
 Whose azure depth their colour emulates,
 Must needs be conversant with upward looks,
 Prayer's voiceless service ; but now, seeking nought
 And shunning nought, their own peculiar life
 Of motion they renounce, and with the head
 Partake its inclination towards earth
 In humble grace, and quiet pensiveness
 Caught at the point where it stops short of sadness

Offspring of soul-bewitching Art, make me
 Thy confidant ! say, whence derived that air
 Of calm abstraction ? Can the ruling thought
 Be with some lover far away, or one
 Crossed by misfortune, or of doubted faith ?
 Inapt conjecture ! Childhood here, a moon
 Crescent in simple loveliness serene,
 Has but approached the gates of womanhood,
 Not entered them ; her heart is yet unpierced
 By the blind Archer-god ; her fancy free :
 The fount of feeling if unsought elsewhere,
 Will not be found.

Her right hand, as it lies
 Across the slender wrist of the left arm
 Upon her lap reposing, holds—but mark
 How slackly, for the absent mind permits
 No firmer grasp—a little wild-flower, joined
 As in a posy, with a few pale ears
 Of yellowing corn, the same that overtopped
 And in their common birthplace sheltered it
 Till they were plucked together ; a blue flower
 Called by the thrifty husbandman a weed ;
 But Ceres, in her garland, might have worn
 That ornament, unblamed. The floweret, held
 In scarcely conscious fingers, was, she knows

(Her Father told her so) in youth's gay dawn
 Her Mother's favourite ; and the orphan Girl,
 In her own dawn—a dawn less gay and bright,
 Loves it, while there in solitary peace
 She sits, for that departed Mother's sake.
 —Not from a source less sacred is derived
 (Surely I do not err) that pensive air
 Of calm abstraction through the face diffused
 And the whole person.

Words have something told
 More than the pencil can, and verily
 More than is needed, but the precious Art
 Forgives their interference—Art divine,
 That both creates and fixes, in despite
 Of Death and Time, the marvels it hath wrought.

Strange contrasts have we in this world of ours !
 That posture, and the look of filial love
 Thinking of past and gone, with what is left
 Dearly united, might be swept away
 From this fair Portrait's fleshly Archetype,
 Even by an innocent fancy's slightest freak
 Banished, nor ever, haply, be restored
 To their lost place, or meet in harmony
 So exquisite ; but *here* do they abide,
 Enshrined for ages. Is not then the Art
 Godlike, a humble branch of the divine,
 In visible quest of immortality,
 Stretched forth with trembling hope ?—In every realm,
 From high Gibraltar to Siberian plains,
 Thousands, in each variety of tongue
 That Europe knows, would echo this appeal ;
 One above all, a Monk who waits on God
 In the magnific Convent built of yore
 To sanctify the Escorial palace. He—
 Guiding, from cell to cell and room to room,
 A British Painter (eminent for truth
 In character and depth of feeling, shown
 By labours that have touched the hearts of kings,
 And are endeared to simple cottagers)—
 Came, in that service, to a glorious work,
 Our Lord's Last Supper, beautiful as when first
 The appropriate Picture, fresh from Titian's hand,
 Graced the Refectory : and there, while both
 Stood with eyes fixed upon that masterpiece,
 The hoary Father in the Stranger's ear

590 The Foregoing Subject Resumed

Breathed out these words :—" Here daily do we sit,
 Thanks given to God for daily bread, and here
 Pondering the mischiefs of these restless times,
 And thinking of my Brethren, dead, dispersed,
 Or changed and changing, I not seldom gaze
 Upon this solemn Company unmoved
 By shock of circumstance, or lapse of years,
 Until I cannot but believe that they—
 They are in truth the Substance, we the Shadows "

So spake the mild Jeronymite, his griefs
 Melting away within him like a dream
 Ere he had ceased to gaze, perhaps to speak :
 And I, grown old, but in a happier land,
 Domestic Portrait ! have to verse consigned
 In thy calm presence those heart-moving words :
 Words that can soothe, more than they agitate ;
 Whose spirit, like the angel that went down
 Into Bethesda's pool, with healing virtue
 Informs the fountain in the human breast
 Which by the visitation was disturbed.

—But why this stealing tear ? Companion mute,
 On thee I look, not sorrowing ; fare thee well,
 My Song's Inspirer, once again farewell !

(1834)

THE FOREGOING SUBJECT RESUMED

AMONG a grave fraternity of Monks,
 For One, but surely not for One alone,
 Triumphs, in that great work, the Painter's skill,
 Humbling the body, to exalt the soul ;
 Yet representing, amid wreck and wrong
 And dissolution and decay, the warm
 And breathing life of flesh ; as if already
 Clothed with impassive majesty, and graced
 With no mean earnest of a heritage
 Assigned to it in future worlds. Thou, too,
 With thy memorial flower, meek Portraiture !
 From whose serene companionship I passed
 Pursued by thoughts that haunt me still ; thou also —
 Though but a simple object, into light
 Called forth by those affections that endure
 The private hearth ; though keeping thy sole seat
 In singleness, and little tried by time,
 Creation, as it were, of yesterday—
 With a congenial function art endued

For each and all of us, together joined
 In course of nature under a low roof
 By charities and duties that proceed
 Out of the bosom of a wiser vow.
 To a like salutary sense of awe
 Or sacred wonder, growing with the power
 Of meditation that attempts to weigh,
 In faithful scales, things and their opposites,
 Can thy enduring quiet gently raise
 A household small and sensitive,—whose love,
 Dependent as in part its blessings are
 Upon frail ties dissolving or dissolved
 On earth, will be revived, we trust, in heaven.
 (1834)

TO A CHILD¹

WRITTEN IN HER ALBUM

SMALL service is true service while it lasts :
 Of humblest Friends, bright Creature ! scorn not one :
 The Daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
 Protects the lingering dew-drop from the Sun.
 (1834)

LINES²

WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF THE COUNTESS OF LONSDALE.
 NOV. 5, 1834

LADY ! a Pen (perhaps with thy regard,
 Among the Favoured, favoured not the least)
 Left, 'mid the Records of this Book inscribed,
 Deliberate traces, registers of thought
 And feeling, suited to the place and time
 That gave them birth :—months passed, and still this hand,
 That had not been too timid to imprint
 Words which the virtues of thy Lord inspired,
 Was yet not bold enough to write of Thee.
 And why that scrupulous reserve ? In sooth
 The blameless cause lay in the Theme itself.
 Flowers are there many that delight to strive
 With the sharp wind, and seem to court the shower,

¹ This quatrain was extempore on observing this image, as I had often done, on the lawn of Rydal Mount. It was first written down in the Album of my god-daughter, Rotha Quillinan.

² This is a faithful picture of that amiable Lady, as she then was. The youthfulness of figure and demeanour and habits, which she retained in almost unprecedented degree, departed a very few years after, and she died without violent disease by gradual decay before she reached the period of old age.

Yet are by nature careless of the sun
 Whether he shine on them or not ; and some,
 Where'er he moves along the unclouded sky,
 Turn a broad front full on his flattering beams :
 Others do rather from their notice shrink,
 Loving the dewy shade,—a humble band,
 Modest and sweet, a progeny of earth,
 Congenial with thy mind and character,
 High-born Augusta !

Witness, Towers, and Groves !
 And Thou, wild Stream, that giv'st the honoured name
 Of Lowther to this ancient Line, bear witness
 From thy most secret haunts ; and ye Parterres,
 Which She is pleased and proud to call her own,
 Witness how oft upon my noble Friend
Mute offerings, tribute from an inward sense
 Of admiration and respectful love,
 Have waited—till the affections could no more
 Endure that silence, and broke out in song,
 Snatches of music taken up and dropt
 Like those self-solacing, those under, notes
 Trilled by the redbreast, when autumnal leaves
 Are thin upon the bough. Mine, only mine,
 The pleasure was, and no one heard the praise,
 Checked, in the moment of its issue, checked
 And reprehended, by a fancied blush
 From the pure qualities that called it forth.

Thus Virtue lives debarred from Virtue's meed ;
 Thus, Lady, is retiredness a veil
 That, while it only spreads a softening charm
 O'er features looked at by discerning eyes,
 Hides half their beauty from the common gaze ;
 And thus, even on the exposed and breezy hill
 Of lofty station, female goodness walks,
 When side by side with lunar gentleness,
 As in a cloister. Yet the grateful Poor
 (Such the immunities of low estate,
 Plain Nature's enviable privilege,
 Her sacred recompence for many wants
 Open their hearts before Thee, pouring out
 All that they think and feel, with tears of joy ;
 And benedictions not unheard in heaven :
 And friend in the ear of friend, where speech is free
 To follow truth, is eloquent as they.

Then let the Book receive in these prompt lines

A just memorial ; and thine eyes consent
 To read that they, who mark thy course, behold
 A life declining with the golden light
 Of summer, in the season of sere leaves ;
 See cheerfulness undamped by stealing Time ;
 See studied kindness flow with easy stream,
 Illustrated with inborn courtesy ;
 And an habitual disregard of self
 Balanced by vigilance for others' weal.

And shall the Verse not tell of lighter gifts
 With these ennobling attributes conjoined
 And blended, in peculiar harmony,
 By Youth's surviving spirit ? What agile grace !
 A nymph-like liberty, in nymph-like form,
 Beheld with wonder ; whether floor or path
 Thou tread ; or sweep—borne on the managed steed—
 Fleet as the shadows, over down or field,
 Driven by strong winds at play among the clouds.

Yet one word more—one farewell word—a wish
 Which came, but it has passed into a prayer—
 That, as thy sun in brightness is declining,
 So—at an hour yet distant for *their* sakes
 Whose tender love, here faltering on the way
 Of a diviner love, will be forgiven—
 So may it set in peace, to rise again
 For everlasting glory won by faith.

TO THE MOON

COMPOSED BY THE SEASIDE,—ON THE COAST OF
 CUMBERLAND

WANDERER ! that stoop'st so low, and com'st so near
 To human life's unsettled atmosphere ;
 Who lov'st with Night and Silence to partake,
 So might it seem, the cares of them that wake ;
 And, through the cottage-lattice softly peeping,
 Dost shield from harm the humblest of the sleeping ;
 What pleasure once encompassed those sweet names
 Which yet in thy behalf the Poet claims,
 An idolising dreamer as of yore ! —
 I slight them all ; and, on this sea-beat shore
 Sole-sitting, only can to thoughts attend
 That bid me hail thee as the SAILOR'S FRIEND ;
 So call thee for heaven's grace through thee made known
 By confidence supplied and mercy shown,

When not a twinkling star or beacon's light
Abates the perils of a stormy night ;
And for less obvious benefits, that find
Their way, with thy pure help, to heart and mind ;
Both for the adventurer starting in life's prime ;
And veteran ranging round from clime to clime,
Long-baffled hope's slow fever in his veins,
And wounds and weakness oft his labour's sole remains.

The aspiring Mountains and the winding Streams,
Empress of Night ! are gladdened by thy beams ;
A look of thine the wildness pervades,
And penetrates the forest's inmost shades ;
Thou, chequering peaceably the minster's gloom,
Guid'st the pale Mourner to the lost one's tomb ;
Canst reach the Prisoner—to his grated cell
Welcome, though silent and intangible !—
And lives there one, of all that come and go
On the great waters toiling to and fro,
One, who has watched thee at some quiet hour
Enthroned aloft in undisputed power,
Or crossed by vapoury streaks and clouds that move
Catching the lustre they in part reprove—
Nor sometimes felt a fitness in thy sway
To call up thoughts that shun the glare of day,
And make the serious happier than the gay ?

Yes, lovely Moon ! if thou so mildly bright
Dost rouse, yet surely in thy own despite,
To fiercer mood the phrenzy-stricken brain,
Let me a compensating faith maintain ;
That there's a sensitive, a tender, part
Which thou canst touch in every human heart,
For healing and composure.—But, as least
And mightiest billows ever have confessed
Thy domination ; as the whole vast Sea
Feels through her lowest depths thy sovereignty ;
So shines that countenance with especial grace
On them who urge the keel her *plains* to trace
Furrowing its way right onward. The most rude,
Cut off from home and country, may have stood—
Even till long gazing hath bedimmed his eye,
Or the mute rapture ended in a sigh—
Touched by accordance of thy placid cheer,
With some internal lights to memory dear,
Or fancies stealing forth to soothe the breast .
Tired with its daily share of earth's unrest,—

Gentle awakenings, visitations meek ;
 A kindly influence whereof few will speak,
 Though it can wet with tears the hardest cheek.

And when thy beauty in the shadowy cave
 Is hidden, buried in its monthly grave ;
 Then, while the Sailor, 'mid an open sea
 Swept by a favouring wind that leaves thought free,
 Paces the deck—no star perhaps in sight,
 And nothing save the moving ship's own light
 To cheer the long dark hours of vacant night—
 Oft with his musings does thy image blend,
 In his mind's eye thy crescent horns ascend,
 And thou art still, O Moon, that SAILOR'S FRIEND !

(1835)

TO THE MOON

RYDAL

QUEEN of the stars !—so gentle, so benign,
 That ancient Fable did to thee assign,
 When darkness creeping o'er thy silver brow
 Warned thee these upper regions to forego,
 Alternate empire in the shades below—
 A Bard, who, lately near the wide-spread sea
 Traversed by gleaming ships, looked up to thee
 With grateful thoughts, doth now thy rising hail
 From the close confines of a shadowy vale.

Glory of night, conspicuous yet serene,
 Nor less attractive when by glimpses seen
 Through cloudy umbrage, well might that fair face,
 And all those attributes of modest grace,
 In days when Fancy wrought unchecked by fear,
 Down to the green earth fetch thee from thy sphere,
 To sit in leafy woods by fountains clear !

O still beloved (for thine, meek Power, are charms
 That fascinate the very Babe in arms,
 While he, uplifted towards thee, . . .
 Spreading his little palms in his . . .
 O still beloved, once worshipped ! Time, that frowns
 In his destructive flight on earthly crowns,
 Spares thy mild splendour ; still those far-shot beams
 Tremble on dancing waves and rippling streams
 With stainless touch, as chaste as when thy praise
 Was sung by Virgin-choirs in festal lays ;
 And through dark trials still dost thou explore
 Thy way for increase punctual as of yore,

When teeming Matrons—yielding to rude faith
 In mysteries of birth and life and death
 And painful struggle and deliverance—prayed
 Of thee to visit them with lenient aid
 What though the rites be swept away, the fanes
 Extinct that echoed to the votive strains ;
 Yet thy mild aspect does not, cannot, cease
 Love to promote and purity and peace ;
 And Fancy, unproved, even yet may trace
 Faint types of suffering in thy beamless face.

Then, silent Monitress ! let us—not blind
 To worlds unthought of till the searching mind
 Of Science laid them open to mankind—
 Told, also, how the voiceless heavens declare
 God's glory ; and acknowledging thy share
 In that blest charge ; let us—without offence
 To aught of highest, holiest, influence—
 Receive whatever good 'tis given thee to dispense.
 May sage and simple, catching with one eye
 The moral intimations of the sky,
 Learn from thy course, where'er their own be taken,
 "To look on tempests, and be never shaken ;"
 To keep with faithful step the appointed way
 Eclipsing or eclipsed, by night or day,
 And from example of thy monthly range
 Gently to brook decline and fatal change ;
 Meek, patient, stedfast, and with loftier scope,
 Than thy revival yields, for gladsome hope !
 (1835)

FAREWELL LINES¹

"HIGH bliss is only for a higher state,"
 But, surely, if severe afflictions borne
 With patience merit the reward of peace,
 Peace ye deserve ; and may the solid good,
 Sought by a wise though late exchange, and here
 With bounteous hand beneath a cottage-roof
 To you accorded, never be withdrawn,
 Nor for the world's best promises renounced.
 Most soothing was it for a welcome Friend,
 Fresh from the crowded city, to behold
 That lonely union, privacy so deep,
 Such calm employments, such entire content.

¹ [A farewell to Charles Lamb and his sister, on their retiring from London to Enfield.—*Ed.*]

Written after Death of Charles Lamb 597

So when the rain is over, the storm laid,
A pair of herons oft-times have I seen,
Upon a rocky islet, side by side,
Drying their feathers in the sun, at ease ;
And so, when night with grateful gloom had fallen,
Two glow-worms in such nearness that they shared,
As seemed, their soft self-satisfying light,
Each with the other, on the dewy ground,
Where He that made them blesses their repose.—
When wandering among lakes and hills I note,
Once more, those creatures thus by nature paired,
And guarded in their tranquil state of life,
Even, as your happy presence to my mind
Their union brought, will they repay the debt,
And send a thankful spirit back to you,
With hope that we, dear Friends ! shall meet again.

(1828 ?)

WRITTEN AFTER THE DEATH OF CHARLES LAMB¹

To a good Man of most dear memory
This Stone is sacred. Here he lies apart
From the great city where he first drew breath,
Was reared and taught ; and humbly earned his bread,
To the strict labours of the merchant's desk
By duty chained. Not seldom did those tasks
Tease, and the thought of time so spent depress,
His spirit, but the recompence was high ;
Firm Independence, Bounty's rightful sire ;
Affections, warm as sunshine, free as air ;
And when the precious hours of leisure came,
Knowledge and wisdom, gained from converse sweet
With books, or while he ranged the crowded streets
With a keen eye, and overflowing heart :
So genius triumphed over seeming wrong,
And poured out truth in works by thoughtful love
Inspired—works potent over smiles and tears.
And as round mountain-tops the lightning plays,
Thus innocently sported, breaking forth
As from a cloud of some grave sympathy,

¹ Light will be thrown upon the tragic circumstance alluded to in this poem when, after the death of Charles Lamb's Sister, his biographer, Mr. Sergeant Talfourd, shall be at liberty to relate particulars which could not, at the time his Memoir was written, be given to the public. [The "tragic circumstance" is, with the rest of Lamb's story, now of course common knowledge.—*E. d.*]

598 Written after Death of Charles Lamb

Humour and wild instinctive wit, and all
 The vivid flashes of his spoken words.
 From the most gentle creature nursed in fields
 Had been derived the name he bore—a name,
 Wherever Christian altars have been raised,
 Hallowed to meekness and to innocence ;
 And if in him meekness at times gave way,
 Provoked out of herself by troubles strange,
 Many and strange, that hung about his life ;
 Still, at the centre of his being, lodged
 A soul by resignation sanctified :
 And if too often, self-reproached, he felt
 That innocence belongs not to our kind,
 A power that never ceased to abide in him,
 Charity, 'mid the multitude of sins
 That she can cover, left not his exposed
 To an unforgiving judgment from just Heaven.
 Oh, he was good, if e'er a good Man lived !

* * * * *

From a reflecting mind and sorrowing heart
 Those simple lines flowed with an earnest wish,
 Though but a doubting hope, that they might serve
 Fitly to guard the precious dust of him
 Whose virtues called them forth. That aim is missed ;
 For much that truth most urgently required
 Had from a faltering pen been asked in vain :
 Yet, haply, on the printed page received,
 The imperfect record, there, may stand unblamed
 As long as verse of mine shall breathe the air
 Of memory, or see the light of love.

Thou wert a scorner of the fields, my Friend,
 But more in show than truth ; and from the fields,
 And from the mountains, to thy rural grave
 Transported, my soothed spirit hovers o'er
 Its green untrodden turf, and blowing flowers ;
 And taking up a voice shall speak (tho' still
 Awed by the theme's peculiar sanctity
 Which words less free presumed not even to touch)
 Of that fraternal love, whose heaven-lit lamp
 From infancy, through manhood, to the last
 Of threescore years, and to thy latest hour,
 Burnt on with ever-strengthening light, enshrined
 Within thy bosom.

“Wonderful” hath been,
 The love established between man and man,

Written after Death of Charles Lamb 599

"Passing the love of women ;" and between
Man and his help-mate in fast wedlock joined
Through God, is raised a spirit and soul of love
Without whose blissful influence Paradise
Had been no Paradise ; and earth were now
A waste where creatures bearing human form,
Direst of savage beasts, would roam in fear,
Joyless and comfortless. Our days glide on ;
And let him grieve who cannot choose but grieve
That he hath been an Elm without his Vine,
And her bright dower of clustering charities,
That, round his trunk and branchès, might have clung
Enriching and adorning. Unto thee,
Not so enriched, not so adorned, to thee
Was given (say rather, thou of later birth
Wert given to her) a Sister—'tis a word
Timidly uttered, for she *lives*, the meek,
The self-restraining, and the ever-kind ;
In whom thy reason and intelligent heart
Found—for all interests, hopes, and tender cares,
All softening, humanising, hallowing powers,
Whether withheld, or for her sake unsought—
More than sufficient recompence !

Her love
(What weakness prompts the voice to tell it here?
Was as the love of mothers ; and when years,
Lifting the boy to man's estate, had called
The long-protected to assume the part
Of a protector, the first filial tie
Was undissolved ; and, in or out of sight,
Remained imperishably interwoven
With life itself. Thus, 'mid a shifting world,
Did they together testify of time
And season's difference—a double tree
With two collateral stems sprung from one root ;
Such were they—such thro' life they *might* have been
In union, in partition only such ;
Otherwise wrought the will of the Most High ;
Yet, thro' all visitations and all trials,
Still they were faithful ; like two vessels launched
From the same beach one ocean to explore
With mutual help, and sailing—to their league
True, as inexorable winds, or bars
Floating, or fixed of polar ice, allow.
But turn we rather, let my spirit turn

600 The Death of James Hogg

With thine, O silent and invisible Friend !
To those dear intervals, nor rare nor brief,
When reunited, and by choice withdrawn
From miscellaneous converse, ye were taught
That the remembrance of foregone distress,
And the worse fear of future ill (which oft
Doth hang around it, as a sickly child
Upon its mother) may be both alike
Disarmed of power, to unsettle present good
So prized, and things inward and outward held
In such an even balance, that the heart
Acknowledges God's grace, his mercy feels,
And in its depth of gratitude is still.

O gift divine of quiet sequestration !
The hermit, exercised in prayer and praise,
And feeding daily on the hope of heaven,
Is happy in his vow, and fondly cleaves
To life-long singleness ; but happier far
Was to your souls, and, to the thoughts of others,
A thousand times more beautiful appeared,
Your *dual* loneliness. The sacred tie
Is broken ; yet why grieve ? for Time but holds
His moiety in trust, till Joy shall lead
To the blest world where parting is unknown.
(1835)

EXTEMPORE EFFUSION UPON THE DEATH OF JAMES HOGG ¹

WHEN first, descending from the moorlands,
I saw the Stream of Yarrow glide
Along a bare and open valley,
The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.
When last along its banks I wandered,
Through groves that had begun to shed
Their golden leaves upon the pathways,
My steps the Border-minstrel led.
The mighty Minstrel breathes no longer,
'Mid mouldering ruins low he lies ;
And death upon the braes of Yarrow,
Has closed the Shepherd-poet's eyes :

¹ These verses were written extempore, immediately after reading a notice of the Ettrick Shepherd's death in the Newcastle paper, to the Editor of which I sent a copy for publication. The persons lamented in these verses were all either of my friends or acquaintance.

Upon Seeing a Coloured Drawing 601

Nor has the rolling year twice measured,
From sign to sign, its stedfast course,
Since every mortal power of Coleridge
Was frozen at its marvellous source ;
The rapt One, of the godlike forehead,
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth :
And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle,
Has vanished from his lonely hearth.
Like clouds that rake the mountain-summits,
Or waves that own no curbing hand,
How fast has brother followed brother
From sunshine to the sunless land !
Yet I, whose lids from infant slumber
Were earlier raised, remain to hear
A timid voice, that asks in whispers,
" Who next will drop and disappear ?"
Our haughty life is crowned with darkness,
Like London with its own black wreath,
On which with thee, O Crabbe ! forth-looking,
I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.
As if but yesterday departed,
Thou too art gone before ; but why,
O'er ripe fruit, seasonably gathered,
Should frail survivors heave a sigh ?
Mourn rather for that holy Spirit,
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep ;
For Her who, ere her summer faded,
Has sunk into a breathless sleep.
No more of old romantic sorrows,
For slaughtered Youth or love-lorn Maid !
With sharper grief is Yarrow smitten,
And Ettrick mourns with her their Poet dead.

(Nov. 1835)

UPON SEEING A COLOURED DRAWING OF THE BIRD OF PARADISE IN AN ALBUM¹

Who rashly strove thy Image to portray ?
Thou buoyant minion of the tropic air ;
How could he think of the live creature—gay

¹ I cannot forbear to record that the last seven lines of this Poem were composed in bed during the night of the day on which my sister Sara Hutchinson died about 6 P.M., and it was the thought of her innocent and beautiful life that, through faith, prompted the words—

" On wings that fear no glance of God's pure sight,
No tempest from his breath."

602 Composed after reading Newspaper

With a divinity of colours, drest
 In all her brightness, from the dancing crest
 Far as the last gleam of the filmy train
 Extended and extending to sustain
 The motions that it graces—and forbear
 To drop his pencil ! Flowers of every clime
 Depicted on these pages smile at time ;
 And gorgeous insects copied with nice care
 Are here, and likenesses of many a shell
 Tossed ashore by restless waves,
 Or in the diver's grasp fetched up from caves
 Where sea-nymphs might be proud to dwell :
 But whose rash hand (again I ask) could dare,
 'Mid casual tokens and promiscuous shows,
 To circumscribe this Shape in fixed repose ;
 Could imitate for indolent survey,
 Perhaps for touch profane,
 Plumes that might catch, but cannot keep, a stain ;
 And, with cloud-streaks lightest and loftiest, share
 The sun's first greeting, his last farewell ray !
 Resplendent Wanderer ! followed with glad eyes
 Where'er her course ; mysterious Bird !
 To whom, by wondering Fancy stirred,
 Eastern Islanders have given
 A holy name—the Bird of Heaven !
 And even a title higher still
 The Bird of God ! whose blessed will
 She seems performing as she flies
 Over the earth and through the skies
 In never-wearied search of Paradise—
 Region that crowns her beauty with the name
 She bears for *us*—for us how blest,
 How happy at all seasons, could like aim
 Uphold our Spirits urged to kindred flight
 On wings that fear no glance of God's pure sight,
 No tempest from his breath, their promised rest
 Seeking with indefatigable quest
 Above a world that deems itself most wise
 When most enslaved by gross realities !

(1835)

COMPOSED AFTER READING A NEWSPAPER OF THE DAY

"PEOPLE! your chains are severing link by link ;
 Soon shall the Rich be levelled down—the Poor

‘ By a blest Husband Guided ’ 603

Meet them half way.” Vain boast ! for These, the more
 They thus would rise, must low and lower sink
 Till, by repentance stung, they fear to think ;
 While all lie prostrate, save the tyrant few
 Bent in quick turns each other to undo,
 And mix the poison, they themselves must drink.
 Mistrust thyself, vain Country ! cease to cry,
 “ Knowledge will save me from the threatened woe.”
 For, if than other rash ones more thou know,
 Yet on presumptuous wing as far would fly
 Above thy knowledge as they dared to go,
 Thou wilt provoke a heavier penalty.
 (1835)

“ BY A BLEST HUSBAND GUIDED, MARY
 CAME ” ¹

By a blest Husband guided, Mary came
 From nearest kindred, Vernon her new name ;
 She came, though meek of soul, in seemly pride
 Of happiness and hope, a youthful Bride.
 O dread reverse ! if aught *be* so, which proves
 That God will chasten whom he dearly loves.
 Faith bore her up through pains in mercy given,
 And troubles that were each a step to Heaven :
 Two Babes were laid in earth before she died ;
 A third now slumbers at the Mother’s side ;
 Its Sister-twin survives, whose smiles afford
 A trembling solace to her widowed Lord.

Reader ! if to thy bosom cling the pain
 Of recent sorrow combated in vain ;
 Or if thy cherished grief have failed to thwart
 Time still intent on his insidious part,
 Lulling the mourner’s best good thoughts asleep,
 Pilfering regrets we would, but cannot, keep ;
 Bear with Him—judge *Him* gently who makes known
 His bitter loss by this memorial Stone ;
 And pray that in his faithful breast the grace
 Of resignation find a hallowed place.

(1835)

¹ This lady was named Carleton ; she, along with a sister, was brought up in the neighbourhood of Ambleside. The epitaph, a part of it at least, is in the church at Bromsgrove, where she resided after her marriage.

604 Roman Antiquities Discovered

"DESPONDING FATHER ! MARK THIS ALTERED BOUGH"

DESPONDING Father ! mark this altered bough,
So beautiful of late, with sunshine warmed,
Or moist with dews ; what more unsightly now,
Its blossoms shrivelled, and its fruit, if formed,
Invisible ? yet Spring her genial brow
Knits not o'er that discolouring and decay
As false to expectation. Nor fret thou
At like unlovely process in the May
Of human life : a Stripling's graces blow,
Fade and are shed, that from their timely fall
(Misdeem it not a cankerous change) may grow
Rich mellow bearings, that for thanks shall call :
In all men, sinful is it to be slow
To hope—in Parents, sinful above all.

(1835)

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES DISCOVERED AT BISHOPSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE¹

WHILE poring Antiquarians search the ground
Upturned with curious pains, the Bard, a Seer,
Takes fire :—The men that have been reappear ;
Romans for travel girt, for business gown'd ;
And some recline on couches, myrtle-crown'd,
In festal glee ; why not ? For fresh and clear,
As if its hues were of the passing year,
Dawns this time-buried pavement. From that mound
Hoards may come forth of Trajans, Maximins,
Shrunk into coins with all their warlike toil :
Or a fierce impress issues with its foil
Of tenderness—the Wolf, whose suckling Twins
The unlettered ploughboy pities when he wins
The casual treasure from the furrowed soil.

(1835)

ST. CATHERINE OF LEDBURY²

WHEN human touch (as monkish books attest)
Nor was applied nor could be, Ledbury bells

¹ My attention to these antiquities was directed by Mr. Walker, son to the itinerant Eidouranian Philosopher. The beautiful pavement was discovered within a few yards of the front door of his parsonage, and appeared from the site (in full view of several hills upon which there had formerly been Roman encampments) as if it might have been the villa of the commander of the force, at least such was Mr. Walker's conjecture.

² Written on a journey from Brinsop Court, Herefordshire.

Broke forth in concert flung adown the dells,
And upward, high as Malvern’s cloudy crest ;
Sweet tones, and caught by a noble Lady blest
To rapture ! Mabel listened at the side
Of her loved mistress : soon the music died,
And Catherine said, *But I set up my rest.*
Warned in a dream, the Wanderer long had sought
A home that by such miracle of sound
Must be revealed :—she heard it now, or felt
The deep, deep joy of a confiding thought ;
And there, a saintly anchoress, she dwelt
Till she exchanged for heaven that happy ground.

(1835)

“WHY ART THOU SILENT?”¹

WHY art thou silent ? Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair ?
Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant ?
Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant—
Bound to thy service with unceasing care,
The mind’s least generous wish a mendicant
For nought but what thy happiness could spare.
Speak—though this soft warm heart, once free to hold
A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
Be left more desolate, more dreary cold
Than a forsaken bird’s-nest filled with snow
’Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine—
Speak, that my torturing doubts their end may know !

(1835)

ON THE ROAD BETWEEN PRESTON AND
LANCASTER

Four fiery steeds impatient of the rein
Whirled us o’er sunless ground beneath a sky
As void of sunshine, when, from that wide plain,
Clear tops of far-off mountains we descry,
Like a Sierra of cerulean Spain,
All light and lustre. Did no heart reply ?
Yes, there was One ;—for One, asunder fly
The thousand links of that ethereal chain ;

¹ In the month of January, when Dora and I were walking from Town-end, Grasmere, across the vale, snow being on the ground, she espied, in the thick though leafless hedge, a bird’s nest half filled with snow. Out of this comfortless appearance arose this Sonnet.

And green vales open out, with grove and field,
 And the fair front of many a happy Home ;
 Such tempting spots as into vision come
 While Soldiers, weary of the arms they wield
 And sick at heart of strife-ful Christendom,
 Gaze on the moon by parting clouds revealed.

(1835)

TO —¹

“ Miss not the occasion : by the forelock take
 That subtle Power, the never-halting Time,
 Lest a mere moment’s putting-off should make
 Mischance almost as heavy as a crime.”

“ WAIT, prithee, wait ! ” this answer Lesbia threw
 Forth to her Dove, and took no further heed ;
 Her eye was busy, while her fingers flew
 Across the harp, with soul-engrossing speed ;
 But from that bondage when her thoughts were freed
 She rose, and toward the close-shut casement drew,
 Whence the poor unregarded Favourite, true
 To old affections, had been heard to plead
 With flapping wing for entrance. What a shriek !
 Forced from that voice so lately tuned to a strain
 Of harmony !—a shriek of terror, pain,
 And self-reproach ! for, from aloft, a Kite
 Pounced,—and the Dove, which from its ruthless beak
 She could not rescue, perished in her sight !

(1835)

“ SAID SECRECY TO COWARDICE ”

SAID Secrecy to Cowardice and Fraud,
 Falsehood and Treachery, in close council met,
 Deep under ground, in Pluto’s cabinet,
 “ The frost of England’s pride will soon be thawed ;
 Hooded the open brow that overawed
 Our schemes ; the faith and honour, never yet
 By us with hope encountered, be upset ;—
 For once I burst my bands, and cry, applaud ! ”
 Then whispered she, “ The Bill is carrying out ! ”
 They heard, and, starting up, the Brood of Night
 Clapped hands, and shook with glee their matted locks ;
 All Powers and Places that abhor the light
 Joined in the transport, echoed back their shout,
 Hurrah for —, hugging his Ballot-box !

(1835)

¹ The fate of this poor Dove, as described, was told to me at Brinsop Court, by the young lady to whom I have given the name of Lesbia.

Memorials of a Tour in Italy 607

NOVEMBER 1836

EVEN so for me a Vision sanctified
The sway of Death ; long ere mine eyes had seen
Thy countenance—the still rapture of thy mien—
When thou, dear Sister ! wert become Death's Bride :
No trace of pain or languor could abide
That change :—age on thy brow was smoothed—thy cold
Wan cheek at once was privileged to unfold
A loveliness to living youth denied.
Oh ! if within me hope should e'er decline,
The lamp of faith, lost Friend ! too faintly burn ;
Then may that heaven-revealing smile of thine,
The bright assurance, visibly return :
And let my spirit in that power divine
Rejoice, as, through that power, it ceased to mourn.

"SIX MONTHS TO SIX YEARS ADDED HE REMAINED"

Six months to six years added he remained
Upon this sinful earth, by sin unstained :
O blessed Lord ! whose mercy then removed
A Child whom every eye that looked on loved ;
Support us, teach us calmly to resign
What we possessed, and now is wholly thine !
(1836)

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY¹

1837

TO

HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

COMPANION ! by whose buoyant Spirit cheered,
In whose experience trusting, day by day
Treasures I gained with zeal that neither feared
The toils nor felt the crosses of the way,

¹ During my whole life I had felt a strong desire to visit Rome and the other celebrated cities and regions of Italy, but did not think myself justified in incurring the necessary expense till I received from Mr. Moxon, the publisher of a large edition of my poems, a sum sufficient to enable me to gratify my wish without encroaching upon what I considered due to my family. My excellent friend H. C. Robinson readily consented to accompany me, and in March 1837 we set off from London, to which we returned in August, earlier than my companion wished or I should myself have desired had I been, like him, a bachelor.

608 Memorials of a Tour in Italy

These records take, and happy should I be
Were but the Gift a meet Return to thee
For kindnesses that never ceased to flow,
And prompt self-sacrifice to which I owe
Far more than any heart but mine can know.

W. WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, *Feb. 14th*, 1842.

MUSINGS NEAR AQUAPENDENTE

APRIL 1837

YE Apennines ! with all your fertile vales
Deeply embosomed, and your winding shores
Of either sea—an Islander by birth,
A Mountaineer by habit, would resound
Your praise, in meet accordance with your claims
Bestowed by Nature, or from man's great deeds
Inherited :—presumptuous thought !—it fled
Like vapour, like a towering cloud, dissolved.
Not, therefore, shall my mind give way to sadness ;—
Yon snow-white torrent-fall, plumb down it drops
Yet ever hangs or seems to hang in air,³
Lulling the leisure of that high perched town,
AQUAPENDENTE, in her lofty site
Its neighbour and its namesake—town, and flood
Forth flashing out of its own gloomy chasm
Bright sunbeams—the fresh verdure of this lawn
Strewn with grey rocks, and on the horizon's verge,
O'er intervenient waste, through glimmering haze,
Unquestionably kenned, that cone-shaped hill
With fractured summit, no indifferent sight
To travellers, from such comforts as are thine,
Bleak Radicofani ! escaped with joy—
These are before me ; and the varied scene
May well suffice, till noon-tide's sultry heat
Relax, to fix and satisfy the mind
Passive yet pleased. What ! with this Broom in flower
Close at my side ! She bids me fly to greet
Her sisters, soon like her to be attired
With golden blossoms opening at the feet '
Of my own Fairfield. The glad greeting given,
Given with a voice and by a look returned
Of old companionship, Time counts not minutes
Ere, from accustomed paths, familiar fields,
The local Genius hurries me aloft,

Memorials of a Tour in Italy 609

Transported over that cloud-wooing hill,
Seat Sandal, a fond suitor of the clouds,
With dream-like smoothness, to Helvellyn's top,
There to alight upon crisp moss and range,
Obtaining ampler boon, at every step,
Of visual sovereignty—hills multitudinous,
(Not Apennine can boast of fairer) hills
Pride of two nations, wood and lake and plains,
And prospect right below of deep coves shaped
By skeleton arms, that, from the mountain's trunk
Extended, clasp the winds, with mutual moan
Struggling for liberty, while undismayed
The shepherd struggles with them. Onward thence
And downward by the skirt of Greenside fell,
And by Glenridding-screes, and low Glencoign,
Places forsaken now, though loving still
The muses, as they loved them in the days
Of the old minstrels and the border bards.—
But here am I fast bound; and let it pass,
The simple rapture;—who that travels far
To feed his mind with watchful eyes could share
Or wish to share it?—One there surely was,
“The Wizard of the North,” with anxious hope
Brought to this genial climate, when disease
Preyed upon body and mind—yet not the less
Had his sunk eye kindled at those dear words
That spake of bards and minstrels; and his spirit
Had flown with mine to old Helvellyn's brow,
Where once together, in his day of strength,
We stood rejoicing, as if earth were free
From sorrow, like the sky above our heads.

Years followed years, and when, upon the eve
Of his last going from Tweed-side, thought turned
Or by another's sympathy was led,
To this bright land, Hope was for him no friend,
Knowledge no help; Imagination shaped
No promise. Still, in more than ear-deep seats,
Survives for me, and cannot but survive
The tone of voice which wedded borrowed words
To sadness not their own, when, with faint smile
Forced by intent to take from speech its edge,
He said, “When I am there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow.” Prophecy
More than fulfilled, as gay Campania's shores
Soon witnessed, and the city of seven hills,

610 Memorials of a Tour in Italy

Her sparkling fountains and her mouldering tombs;
And more than all, that Eminence which showed
Her splendours, seen, not felt, the while he stood
A few short steps (painful they were) apart
From Tasso's Convent-haven, and retired grave.

Peace to their Spirits! why should Poesy
Yield to the lure of vain regret, and hover
In gloom on wings with confidence outspread
To move in sunshine?—Utter thanks, my Soul!
Tempered with awe, and sweetened by compassion
For them who in the shades of sorrow dwell,
That I—so near the term to human life
Appointed by man's common heritage,
Frail as the frailest, one withal (if that
Deserve a thought) but little known to fame—
Am free to rove where Nature's loveliest looks,
Art's noblest relics, history's rich bequests,
Failed to reanimate and but feebly cheered
The whole world's Darling—free to rove at will
O'er high and low, and if requiring rest,
Rest from enjoyment only.

Thanks poured forth
For what thus far hath blessed my wanderings, thanks
Fervent but humble as the lips can breathe
Where gladness seems a duty—let me guard
Those seeds of expectation which the fruit
Already gathered in this favoured Land
Enfolds within its core. The faith be mine,
That He who guides and governs all, approves
When gratitude, though disciplined to look
Beyond these transient spheres, doth wear a crown
Of earthly hope put on with trembling hand;
Nor is least pleased, we trust, when golden beams,
Reflected through the mists of age, from hours
Of innocent delight, remote or recent,
Shoot but a little way—'tis all they can—
Into the doubtful future. Who would keep
Power must resolve to cleave to it through life,
Else it deserts him, surely as he lives.
Saints would not grieve nor guardian angels frown
If one—while tossed, as was my lot to be,
In a frail bark urged by two slender oars
Over waves rough and deep, that, when they broke,
Dashed their white foam against the palace walls
Of Genoa the superb—should there be led

Memorials of a Tour in Italy 611

To meditate upon his own appointed tasks,
However humble in themselves, with thoughts
Raised and sustained by memory of Him
Who oftentimes within those narrow bounds
Rocked on the surge, there tried his spirit's strength
And grasp of purpose, long ere sailed his ship
To lay a new world open.

Nor less prized
Be those impressions which incline the heart
To mild, to lowly, and to seeming weak,
Bend that way her desires. The dew, the storm—
The dew whose moisture fell in gentle drops
On the small hyssop destined to become,
By Hebrew ordinance devoutly kept,
A purifying instrument—the storm
That shook on Lebanon the cedar's top,
And as it shook, enabling the blind roots
Further to force their way, endowed its trunk
With magnitude and strength fit to uphold
The glorious temple—did alike proceed
From the same gracious will, were both an offspring
Of bounty infinite.

Between Powers that aim
Higher to lift their lofty heads, impelled
By no profane ambition, Powers that thrive
By conflict, and their opposites, that trust
In lowliness—a midway tract there lies
Of thoughtful sentiment for every mind
Pregnant with good. Young, Middle-aged, and Old,
From century on to century, must have known
The emotion—nay, more fitly were it said—
The blest tranquillity that sunk so deep
Into my spirit, when I paced, enclosed
In Pisa's Campo Santo, the smooth floor
Of its Arcades paved with sepulchral slabs,
And through each window's open fretwork looked
O'er the blank Area of sacred earth
Fetched from Mount Calvary, or haply delved
In precincts nearer to the Saviour's tomb,
By hands of men, humble as brave, who fought
For its deliverance—a capacious field
That to descendants of the dead it holds
And to all living mute memento breathes,
More touching far than ought which on the walls
Is pictured, or their epitaphs can speak,

612 Memorials of a Tour in Italy

Of the changed City's long-departed power,
 Glory, and wealth, which, perilous as they are,
 Here did not kill, but nourished, Piety.
 And, high above that length of cloistral roof
 Peering in air and backed by azure sky,
 To kindred contemplations ministers
 The Baptistery's dome, and that which swells
 From the Cathedral pile ; and with the twain
 Conjoined in prospect mutable or fixed
 (As hurry on in eagerness the feet,
 Or pause) the summit of the Leaning-tower.
 Nor less remuneration waits on him
 Who having left the Cemetery stands
 In the Tower's shadow, of decline and fall
 Admonished not without some sense of fear,
 Fear that soon vanishes before the sight
 Of splendour unextinguished, pomp unscathed
 And beauty unimpaired. Grand in itself,
 And for itself, the assemblage, grand and fair
 To view, and for the mind's consenting eye
 A type of age in man, upon its front
 Bearing the world-acknowledged evidence
 Of past exploits, nor fondly after more
 Struggling against the stream of destiny,
 But with its peaceful majesty content.
 —Oh what a spectacle at every turn
 The Place unfolds, from pavement skinned with moss
 Or grass-grown spaces, where the heaviest foot
 Provokes no echoes, but must softly tread ;
 Where Solitude with Silence paired stops short
 Of Desolation, and to Ruin's scythe
 Decay submits not.

But where'er my steps
 Shall wander, chiefly let me cull with care
 Those images of genial beauty, oft
 Too lovely to be pensive in themselves
 But by reflection made so, which do best
 And fittest serve to crown with fragrant wreaths
 Life's cup when almost filled with years, like mine.
 —How lovely robed in forenoon light and shade,
 Each ministering to each, didst thou appear,
 Savona, Queen of territory fair
 As aught that marvellous coast thro' all its length
 Yields to the Stranger's eye. Remembrance holds
 As a selected treasure thy one cliff,

Memorials of a Tour in Italy 613

That, while it wore for melancholy crest
A shattered Convent, yet rose proud to have
Clinging to its steep sides a thousand herbs
And shrubs, whose pleasant looks gave proof how kind
The breath of air can be where earth had else
Seemed churlish. And behold, both far and near,
Garden and field all decked with orange bloom,
And peach and citron, in Spring's mildest breeze
Expanding ; and, along the smooth shore curved
Into a natural port, a tideless sea,
To that mild breeze with motion and with voice
Softly responsive ; and, attuned to all
Those vernal charms of sight and sound, appeared
Smooth space of turf which from the guardian fort
Sloped seaward, turf whose tender April green,
In coolest climes too fugitive, might even here
Plead with the sovereign Sun for longer stay
Than his unmitigated beams allow,
Nor plead in vain, if beauty could preserve,
From mortal change, aught that is born on earth
Or doth on time depend.

While on the brink
Of that high Convent-crested cliff I stood,
Modest Savona ! over all did brood
A pure poetic Spirit—as the breeze,
Mild—as the verdure, fresh—the sunshine, bright—
Thy gentle Chiabrera ! not a stone,
Mural or level with the trodden floor,
In Church or Chapel, if my curious quest
Missed not the truth, retains a single name
Of young or old, warrior, or saint, or sage,
To whose dear memories his sepulchral verse
Paid simple tribute, such as might have flowed
From the clear spring of a plain English heart,
Say rather, one in native fellowship
With all who want not skill to couple grief
With praise, as genuine admiration prompts.
The grief, the praise, are severed from their dust,
Yet in his page the records of that worth
Survive, uninjured ;—glory then to words,
Honour to word-preserving Arts, and hail
Ye kindred local influences that still,
If Hope's familiar whispers merit faith,
Await my steps when they the breezy height
Shall range of philosophic Tusculum ;

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Or Sabine vales explored inspire a wish
 To meet the shade of Horace by the side
 Of his Bandusian fount ; or I invoke
 His presence to point out the spot where once
 He sate, and eulogised with earnest pen
 Peace, leisure, freedom, moderate desires ;
 And all the immunities of rural life
 Extolled, behind Vacuna's crumbling fane.
 Or let me loiter, soothed with what is given
 Nor asking more, on that delicious Bay,
 Parthenope's Domain—Virgilian haunt,
 Illustrated with never-dying verse,
 And, by the Poet's laurel-shaded tomb,
 Age after age to Pilgrims from all lands
 Endeared.

And who—if not a man as cold¹
 In heart as dull in brain—while pacing ground
 Chosen by Rome's legendary Bards, high minds
 Out of her early struggles well inspired
 To localise heroic acts—could look
 Upon the spots with undelighted eye,
 Though even to their last syllable the Lays
 And very names of those who gave them birth
 Have perished?—Verily, to her utmost depth,
 Imagination feels what Reason fears not
 To recognise, the lasting virtue lodged
 In those bold fictions that, by deeds assigned
 To the Valerian, Fabian, Curian Race,
 And others like in fame, created Powers
 With attributes from History derived,
 By Poesy irradiate, and yet graced,
 Through marvellous felicity of skill,
 With something more propitious to high aims
 Than either, pent within her separate sphere,
 Can oft with justice claim.

And not disdaining
 Union with those primeval energies
 To virtue consecrate, stoop ye from your height,
 Christian Traditions ! at my Spirit's call
 Descend, and, on the brow of ancient Rome
 As she survives in ruin, manifest
 Your glories mingled with the brightest hues
 Of her memorial halo, fading, fading,
 But never to be extinct while Earth endures.
 O come, if undishonoured by the prayer,

Memorials of a Tour in Italy 615

From all her Sanctuaries!—Open for my feet
Ye Catacombs, give to mine eyes a glimpse
Of the Devout, as, 'mid your glooms convened
For safety, they of yore enclasped the Cross
On knees that ceased from trembling, or intoned
Their orisons with voices half-suppressed,
But sometimes heard, or fancied to be heard,
Even at this hour.

And thou Mamertine prison,
Into that vault receive me from whose depth
Issues, revealed in no presumptuous vision,
Albeit lifting human to divine,
A Saint, the Church's Rock, the mystic Keys
Grasped in his hand; and lo! with upright sword
Prefiguring his own impendent doom,
The Apostle of the Gentiles; both prepared
To suffer pains with heathen scorn and hate
Inflicted;—blessèd Men, for so to Heaven
They follow their dear Lord!

Time flows—nor winds,
Nor stagnates, nor precipitates his course,
But many a benefit borne upon his breast
For human-kind sinks out of sight, is gone,
No one knows how; nor seldom is put forth
An angry arm that snatches good away,
Never perhaps to reappear. The Stream
Has to our generation brought and brings
Innumerable gains; yet we, who now
Walk in the light of day, pertain full surely
To a chilled age, most pitiably shut out
From that which *is* and actuates, by forms,
Abstractions, and by lifeless fact to fact
Minutely linked with diligence uninspired,
Unrectified, unguided, unsustained,
By godlike insight. To this fate is doomed
Science, wide-spread and spreading still as be
Her conquests, in the world of sense made known,
So with the internal mind it fares; and so
With morals, trusting, in contempt or fear
Of vital principle's controlling law,
To her purblind guide Expediency; and so
Suffers religious faith. Elate with view
Of what is won, we overlook or scorn
The best that should keep pace with it, and must,
Else more and more the general mind will droop,

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Even as if bent on perishing. There lives
No faculty within us which the Soul
Can spare, and humblest earthly Weal demands,
For dignity not placed beyond her reach,
Zealous co-operation of all means
Given or acquired, to raise us from the mire,
And liberate our hearts from low pursuits.
By gross Utilities enslaved, we need
More of ennobling impulse from the past,
If to the future aught of good must come
Sounder and therefore holier than the ends
Which, in the giddiness of self-applause,
We covet as supreme. O grant the crown
That Wisdom wears, or take his treacherous staff
From Knowledge!—If the Muse, whom I have served
This day, be mistress of a single pearl
Fit to be placed in that pure diadem;
Then, not in vain, under these chestnut boughs
Reclined, shall I have yielded up my soul
To transports from the secondary founts
Flowing of time and place, and paid to both
Due homage; nor shall fruitlessly have striven,
By love of beauty moved, to enshrine in verse
Accordant meditations, which in times
Vexed and disordered, as our own, may shed
Influence, at least among a scattered few,
To soberness of mind and peace of heart
Friendly; as here to my repose hath been
This flowering broom's dear neighbourhood, the light
And murmur issuing from yon pendent flood,
And all the varied landscape. Let us now
Rise, and to-morrow greet magnificent Rome.

THE PINE OF MONTE MARIO AT ROME

I saw far off the dark top of a Pine
Look like a cloud—a slender stem the tie
That bound it to its native earth—poised high
'Mid evening hues, along the horizon line,
Striving in peace each other to outshine.
But when I learned the Tree was living there,
Saved from the sordid axe by Beaumont's care,
Oh, what a gush of tenderness was mine!
The rescued Pine-Tree, with its sky so bright
And cloud-like beauty, rich in thoughts of home,

Memorials of a Tour in Italy 617

Death-parted friends, and days too swift in flight,
Supplanted the whole majesty of Rome
(Then first apparent from the Pincian Height)
Crowned with St. Peter's everlasting Dome.

III

AT ROME

Is this, ye Gods, the Capitolian Hill?
Yon petty Steep in truth the fearful Rock,
Tarpeian named of yore, and keeping still
That name, a local Phantom proud to mock
The Traveller's expectation?—Could our Will
Destroy the ideal Power within, 'twere done
Thro' what men see and touch,—slaves wandering on,
Impelled by thirst of all but Heaven-taught skill.
Full oft, our wish obtained, deeply we sigh;
Yet not unrecompensed are they who learn,
From that depression raised, to mount on high
With stronger wing, more clearly to discern
Eternal things; and, if need be, defy
Change, with a brow not insolent, though stern.

IV

AT ROME—REGRETS—IN ALLUSION TO NIEBUHR AND OTHER MODERN HISTORIANS

THOSE old credulities, to nature dear,
Shall they no longer bloom upon the stock
Of History, stript naked as a rock
'Mid a dry desert? What is it we hear?
The glory of Infant Rome must disappear,
Her morning splendours vanish, and their place
Know them no more. If Truth, who veiled her face
With those bright beams yet hid it not, must steer
Henceforth a humbler course perplexed and slow;
One solace yet remains for us who came
Into this world in days when story lacked
Severe research, that in our hearts we know
How, for exciting youth's heroic flame,
Assent is power, belief the soul of fact.

V

ROME

[Continued]

COMPLACENT Fictions were they, yet the same
Involved a history of no doubtful sense,

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History that proves by inward evidence
 From what a precious source of truth it came.
 Ne'er could the boldest Eulogist have dared
 Such deeds to paint, such characters to frame
 But for coeval sympathy prepared
 To greet with instant faith their loftiest claim.
 None but a noble people could have loved
 Flattery in Ancient Rome's pure-minded style:
 Not in like sort the Runic Scald was moved;
 He, nursed 'mid savage passions that defile
 Humanity, sang feats that well might call
 For the blood-thirsty mead of Odin's riotous Hall.

VI

PLEA FOR THE HISTORIAN

FORBEAR to deem the Chronicler unwise,
 Ungentle, or untouched by seemly ruth,
 Who, gathering up all that Time's envious tooth
 Has spared of sound and grave realities,
 Firmly rejects those dazzling flatteries,
 Dear as they are to unsuspecting Youth,
 That might have drawn down Clio from the skies
 To vindicate the majesty of truth.
 Such was her office while she walked with men,
 A Muse, who, not unmindful of her Sire
 All-ruling Jove, whate'er the theme might be
 Revered her Mother, sage Mnemosyne,
 And taught her faithful servants how the lyre
 Should animate, but not mislead, the pen.¹

VII

AT ROME ²

THEY—who have seen the noble Roman's scorn
 Break forth at thought of laying down his head,
 When the blank day is over, garreted
 In his ancestral palace, where, from morn
 To night, the desecrated floors are worn
 By feet of purse-proud strangers; they—who have read

¹ Quem virum—lyra—
 —sumes celebrare Clio?

² I have a private interest in this Sonnet, for I doubt whether it would ever have been written but for the lively picture given me by Anna Ricketts of what they had witnessed of the indignation and sorrow expressed by some Italian noblemen of their acquaintance upon the surrender, which circumstances had obliged them to make, of the best portion of their family mansions to strangers.

Memorials of a Tour in Italy 619

In one meek smile, beneath a peasant's shed,
How patiently the weight of wrong is borne ;
They—who have heard some learned Patriot treat
Of freedom, with mind grasping the whole theme
From ancient Rome, downwards through that bright dream
Of Commonwealths, each city a starlike seat
Of rival glory ; they—fallen Italy—
Nor must, nor will, nor can, despair of Thee !

VIII

NEAR ROME, IN SIGHT OF ST. PETER'S

LONG has the dew been dried on tree and lawn
O'er man and beast a not unwelcome boon
Is shed, the language of approach ;
To shady rest .
Mute are all creatures, as this couchant fawn,
Save insect-swarms that hum in air afloat,
Save that the Cock is crowing, a shrill note,
Startling and shrill as that which roused the dawn.
—Heard in that hour, or when, as now, the nerve
Shrinks from the note as from a mistimed thing,
Oft for a holy warning may it serve,
Charged with remembrance of *his* sudden sting,
His bitter tears, whose name the Papal Chair
And yon resplendent Church are proud to bear.

IX

AT ALBANO ¹

DAYS passed—and Monte Calvo would not clear
His head from mist ; and, as the wind sobbed through
Albano's dripping Ilex avenue,
My dull forebodings in a Peasant's ear
Found casual vent. She said, "Be of good cheer ;
Our yesterday's procession did not sue
In vain ; the sky will change to sunny blue,
Thanks to our Lady's grace." I smiled to hear,
But not in scorn :—the Matron's Faith may lack
The heavenly sanction needed to ensure
Fulfilment ; but, we trust, her upward track
Stops not at this low point, nor wants the lure
Of flowers the Virgin without fear may own,
For by her Son's blest hand the seed was sown.

¹ This Sonnet is founded on simple fact, and was written to enlarge, if possible, the views of those who can see nothing but evil in the intercessions countenanced by the Church of Rome.

NEAR Anio's stream, I spied a gentle Dove
 Perched on an olive branch, and heard her cooing
 'Mid new-born blossoms that soft airs were wooing,
 While all things present told of joy and love.
 But restless Fancy left that olive grove
 To hail the exploratory Bird renewing
 Hope for the few, who, at the world's undoing,
 On the great flood were spared to live and move.
 O bounteous Heaven! signs true as dove and bough
 Brought to the ark are coming evermore,
 Given though we seek them not, but, while we plough
 This sea of life without a visible shore,
 Do neither promise ask nor grace implore
 In what alone is ours, the living Now.

XI

FROM THE ALBAN HILLS, LOOKING TOWARDS ROME

FORGIVE, illustrious Country! these deep sighs,
 Heaved less for thy bright plains and hills bestrown
 With monuments decayed or overthrown,
 For all that tottering stands or prostrate lies,
 Than for like scenes in moral vision shown,
 Ruin perceived for keener sympathies;
 Faith crushed, yet proud of weeds, her gaudy crown;
 Virtues laid low, and mouldering energies.
 Yet why prolong this mournful strain?—Fallen Power,
 Thy fortunes, twice exalted, might provoke
 Verse to glad notes prophetic of the hour
 When thou, uprisen, shalt break thy double yoke,
 And enter, with prompt aid from the Most High,
 On the third stage of thy great destiny.

XII

NEAR THE LAKE OF THRASYMENE

WHEN here with Carthage Rome to conflict came,
 An earthquake, mingling with the battle's shock,
 Checked not its rage; unfelt the ground did rock,
 Sword dropped not, javelin kept its deadly aim.—
 Now all is sun-bright peace. Of that day's shame,
 Or glory, not a vestige seems to endure,
 Save in this Rill that took from blood the name¹
 Which yet it bears, sweet Stream! as crystal pure.

¹ Sanguinetto.

Memorials of a Tour in Italy 621

So may all trace and sign of deeds aloof
From the true guidance of humanity,
Thro' Time and Nature's influence, purify
Their spirit ; or, unless they for reproof
Or warning serve, thus let them all, on ground
That gave them being, vanish to a sound.

XIII

NEAR THE SAME LAKE

For action born, existing to be tried,
Powers manifold we have that intervene
To stir the heart that would too closely screen
Her peace from images to pain allied.
What wonder if at midnight, by the side
Of Sanguinetto, or broad Thrasymene,
The clang of arms is heard, and phantoms glide,
Unhappy ghosts in troops by moonlight seen ;
And singly thine, O vanquished Chief ! whose corse,
Unburied, lay hid under heaps of slain :
But who is He ?—the Conqueror. Would he force
His way to Rome ? Ah, no,—round hill and plain
Wandering, he haunts, at fancy's strong command,
This spot—his shadowy death-cup in his hand.

XIV

THE CUCKOO AT LAVERNA¹

MAY 25, 1837

LIST—'twas the Cuckoo.—O with what delight
Heard I that voice ! and catch it now, though faint,
Far off and faint, and melting into air,
Yet not to be mistaken. Hark again !
Those louder cries give notice that the Bird,
Although invisible as Echo's self,
Is wheeling hitherward. Thanks, happy Creature,
For this unthought-of greeting !

While allured

From vale to hill, from hill to vale led on,
We have pursued, through various lands, a long
And pleasant course ; flower after flower has blown,

¹ Among a thousand delightful feelings connected in my mind with the voice of the cuckoo, there is a personal one which is rather melancholy. I was first convinced that age had rather dulled my hearing, by not being able to catch the sound at the same distance as the younger companions of my walks ; and of this failure I had a proof upon the occasion that suggested these verses. I did not hear the sound till Mr. Robinson had twice or thrice directed my attention to it.

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Embellishing the ground that gave them birth
 With aspects novel to my sight ; but still
 Most fair, most welcome, when they drank the dew
 In a sweet fellowship with kinds beloved,
 For old remembrance sake, And oft—where Spring
 Displayed her richest blossoms among files
 Of orange-trees bedecked with glowing fruit
 Ripe for the hand, or under a thick shade
 Of Ilex, or, if better suited to the hour,
 The lightsome Olive's twinkling canopy—
 Oft have I heard the Nightingale and Thrush
 Blending as in a common English grove
 Their love-songs ; but, where'er my feet might roam,
 Whate'er assemblages of new and old,
 Strange and familiar, might beguile the way,
 A gratulation from that vagrant Voice
 Was wanting,—and most happily till now.

For see, Laverna ! mark the far-famed Pile,
 High on the brink of that precipitous rock,
 Implanted like a Fortress, as in truth
 It is, a Christian Fortress *garrisoned*
 In faith and hope, and
 By a few Monks, a stern society,
 Dead to the world and scorning earth-born joys.
 Nay—though the hopes that drew, the fears that drove,
 St. Francis, far from Man's resort, to abide
 Among these sterile heights of Apennine,
 Bound him, nor, since he raised yon House, have ceased
 To bind his spiritual Progeny, with rules
 Stringent as flesh can tolerate and live ;
 His milder Genius (thanks to the good God
 That made us) over those severe restraints
 Of mind, that dread heart-freezing discipline,
 Doth sometimes here predominate, and works
 By unsought means for gracious purposes ;
 For earth through heaven, for heaven, by changeful earth,
 Illustrated, and mutually endeared.

Rapt though He were above the power of sense,
 Familiarly, yet out of the cleansed heart
 Of that once sinful Being overflowed
 On sun, moon, stars, the nether elements,
 And every shape of creature they sustain,
 Divine affections ; and with beast and bird
 (Stilled from afar—such marvel story tells—
 By casual outbreak of his passionate words,

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And from their own pursuits in field or grove
Drawn to his side by look or act of love
Humane, and virtue of his innocent life)
He wont to hold companionship so free,
So pure, so fraught with knowledge and delight,
As to be likened in his Followers' minds
To that which our first Parents, ere the fall
From their high state darkened the Earth with fear,
Held with all kinds in Eden's blissful bowers.

Then question not that, 'mid the austere Band,
Who breathe the air he breathed, tread where he trod,
Some true Partakers of his loving spirit
Do still survive, and, with those gentle hearts
Consorted, Others, in the power, the faith,
Of a baptized imagination, prompt
To catch from Nature's humblest monitors
Whate'er they bring of impulses sublime.

Thus sensitive must be the Monk, though pale
With fasts, with vigils worn, depressed by years,
Whom in a sunny glade I chanced to see,
Upon a pine-tree's storm-uprooted trunk,
Seated alone, with forehead sky-ward raised,
Hands clasped above the crucifix he wore
Appended to his bosom, and lips closed
By the joint pressure of his musing mood
And habit of his vow. That ancient Man—
Nor haply less the Brother whom I marked,
As we approached the Convent gate, aloft
Looking far forth from his ærial cell,
A young Ascetic—Poet, Hero, Sage,
He might have been, Lover belike he was—
If they received into a conscious ear
The notes whose first faint greeting startled me,
Whose sedulous iteration thrilled with joy
My heart—may have been moved like me to think,
Ah! not like me who walk in the world's ways,
On the great Prophet, styled *the Voice of One*
Crying amid the wilderness, and given,
Now that their snows must melt, their herbs and flowers
Revive, their obstinate winter pass away,
That awful name to Thee, thee, simple Cuckoo,
Wandering in solitude, and evermore
Foretelling and proclaiming, ere thou leave
This thy last haunt beneath Italian skies
To carry thy glad tidings over heights

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Still loftier, and to climes more near the Pole.

Voice of the Desert, fare thee well ; sweet Bird !
If that substantial title please thee more,
Farewell !—but go thy way, no need hast thou
Of a good wish sent after thee ; from bower
To bower as green, from sky to sky as clear,
Thee gentle breezes waft—or airs, that meet
Thy course and sport around thee, softly fan—
Till Night, descending upon hill and vale,
Grants to thy mission a brief term of silence,
And folds thy pinions up in blest repose.

XV

AT THE CONVENT OF CAMALDOLI

GRIEVE for the Man who hither came bereft,
And seeking consolation from above ;
Nor grieve the less that skill to him was left
To paint this picture of his lady-love :
Can she, a blessed saint, the work approve ?
And oh, good Brethren of the cowl, a thing
So fair, to which with peril he must cling,
Destroy in pity, or with care remove.
That bloom—those eyes—can they assist to bind
Thoughts that would stray from Heaven ? The dream
must cease
To be ; by Faith, not sight, his soul must live ;
Else will the enamoured Monk too surely find
How wide a space can part from inward peace
The most profound repose his cell can give.

XVI

CONTINUED

THE world forsaken, all its busy cares
And stirring interests shunned with desperate flight,
All trust abandoned in the healing might
Of virtuous action ; all that courage dares,
Labour accomplishes, or patience bears—
Those helps rejected, they, whose minds perceive
How subtly works man's weakness, sighs may heave
For such a One beset with cloistral snares.
Father of Mercy ! rectify his view,
If with his vows this object ill agree ;
Shed over it thy grace, and thus subdue
Imperious passion in a heart set free :—

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That earthly love may to herself be true,
Give him a soul that cleaveth unto thee.

XVII

AT THE EREMITES OR UPPER CONVENT OF CAMALDOLI

WHAT aim had they, the Pair of Monks, in size
Enormous, dragged, while side by side they sate,
By panting steers up to this convent gate?
How, with empurpled cheeks and pampered eyes,
Dare they confront the lean austerities
Of Brethren who, here fixed, on Jesu wait
In sackcloth, and God's anger deprecate
Through all that humbles flesh and mortifies?
Strange contrast!—verily the world of dreams,
Where mingle, as for mockery combined,
Things in their very essences at strife,
Shows not a sight incongruous as the extremes
That everywhere, before the thoughtful mind,
Meet on the solid ground of waking life.

XVIII

AT VALLOMBROSA

"Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where Etrurian shades
High over-arch'd embower."

PARADISE LOST.

"VALLOMBROSA—I longed in thy shadiest wood
To slumber, reclined on the moss-covered floor!"¹
Fond wish that was granted at last, and the Flood,
That lulled me asleep bids me listen once more.
Its murmur how soft! as it falls down the steep,
Near that Cell—yon sequestered Retreat high in air—
Where our Milton was wont lonely vigils to keep
For converse with God, sought through study and prayer.
The Monks still repeat the tradition with pride,
And its truth who shall doubt? for his Spirit is here;
In the cloud-piercing rocks doth her grandeur abide,
In the pines pointing heavenward her beauty austere;
In the flower-besprent meadows his genius we trace
Turned to humbler delights, in which youth might confide,
That would yield him fit help while prefiguring that Place
Where, if Sin had not entered, Love never had died.
When with life lengthened out came a desolate time,
And darkness and danger had compassed him round,

¹See for the two *first lines*, "Stanzas composed in the Simplon Pass."

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With a thought he would flee to these haunts of his prime
And here once again a kind shelter be found.
And let me believe that when nightly the Muse
Did waft him to Sion, the glorified hill,
Here also, on some favoured height, he would choose
To wander, and drink inspiration at will.

Vallombrosa ! of thee I first heard in the page
Of that holiest of Bards, and the name for my mind
Had a musical charm, which the winter of age
And the changes it brings had no power to unbind.
And now, ye Miltonian shades ! under you
I repose, nor am forced from sweet fancy to part,
While your leaves I behold and the brooks they will strew,
And the realised vision is clasped to my heart.

Even so, and unblamed, we rejoice as we may
In Forms that must perish, frail objects of sense ;
Unblamed—if the Soul be intent on the day
When the Being of Beings shall summon her hence.
For he and he only with wisdom is blest
Who, gathering true pleasures wherever they grow,
Looks up in all places, for joy or for rest,
To the Fountain whence Time and Eternity flow.

XIX

AT FLORENCE¹

UNDER the shadow of a stately Pile,
The dome of Florence, pensive and alone,
Nor giving heed to aught that passed the while,
I stood, and gazed upon a marble stone,
The laurelled Dante's favourite seat. A throne
In just esteem, it rivals ; though no style
Be there of decoration to beguile
The mind, depressed by thought of greatness flown.
As a true man, who long had served the lyre,
I gazed with earnestness, and dared no more.
But in his breast the mighty Poet bore
A Patriot's heart, warm with undying fire.
Bold with the thought, in reverence I sate down,
And, for a moment, filled that empty Throne.

¹ Upon what evidence the belief rests that this stone was a favourite seat of Dante, I do not know ; but a man would little consult his own interest as a traveller, if he should busy himself with doubts as to the fact.

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XX

BEFORE THE PICTURE OF THE BAPTIST, BY RAPHAEL, IN THE
GALLERY AT FLORENCE¹

THE Baptist might have been ordained to cry
Forth from the towers of that huge Pile wherein
His Father served Jehovah; but how win
Due audience, how for aught but scorn defy
The obstinate pride and wanton revelry
Of the Jerusalem below, her sin
And folly, if they with united din
Drown not at once mandate and prophecy?
Therefore the Voice spake from the Desert, thence
To Her, as to her opposite in peace,
Silence, and holiness, and innocence,
To Her and to all Lands its warning sent,
Crying with earnestness that might not cease,
“ Make straight a highway for the Lord—repent ! ”

XXI

AT FLORENCE—FROM MICHAEL ANGELO

RAPT above earth by power of one fair face,
Hers in whose sway alone my heart delights,
I mingle with the blest on those pure heights
Where Man, yet mortal, rarely finds a place.
With Him who made the Work that Work accords
So well, that by its help and through his grace
I raise my thoughts, inform my deeds and words,
Clasping her beauty in my soul's embrace.
Thus, if from two fair eyes mine cannot turn,
I feel how in their presence doth abide
Light which to God is both the way and guide;
And, kindling at their lustre, if I burn,
My noble fire emits the joyful ray
That through the realms of glory shines for aye.

XXII

AT FLORENCE—FROM MICHAEL ANGELO

ETERNAL Lord ! eased of a cumbrous load,
And loosened from the world, I turn to Thee;
Shun, like a shattered bark, the storm, and flee
To thy protection for a safe abode.

¹ It was very hot weather during the week we stayed at Florence; and, never having been there before, I went through much hard service, and am not therefore *ashamed* to confess I fell asleep before this picture and sitting with my back towards the Venus de Medicis.

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The crown of thorns, hands pierced upon the tree,
 The meek, benign, and lacerated face,
 To a sincere repentance promise grace,
 To the sad soul give hope of pardon free.
 With justice mark not Thou, O Light divine,
 My fault, nor hear it with thy sacred ear ;
 Neither put forth that way thy arm severe ;
 Wash with thy blood my sins ; thereto incline
 More readily the more my years require
 Help, and forgiveness speedy and entire.

XXIII

AMONG THE RUINS OF A CONVENT IN THE APENNINES

YE Trees ! whose slender roots entwine
 Altars that piety neglects ;
 Whose infant arms enclasp the shrine
 Which no devotion now respects ;
 If not a straggler from the herd
 Here ruminant, nor shrouded bird,
 Chanting her low-voiced hymn, take pride
 In aught that ye would grace or hide—
 How sadly is your love misplaced,
 Fair Trees, your bounty run to waste !

Ye, too, wild Flowers ! that no one heeds,
 And ye—full often spurned as weeds—
 In beauty clothed, or breathing sweetness
 From fractured arch and mouldering wall—
 Do but more touchingly recall
 Man's headstrong violence and Time's fleetness,
 Making the precincts ye adorn
 Appear to sight still more forlorn.

XXIV

IN LOMBARDY

SEE, where his difficult way that Old Man wins
 Bent by a load of Mulberry leaves !—most hard
 Appears *his* lot, to the small Worm's compared,
 For whom his toil with early day begins.
 Acknowledging no task-master, at will
 (As if her labour and her ease were twins)
She seems to work, at pleasure to lie still ;—
 And softly sleeps within the thread she spins.
 So fare they—the Man serving as her Slave.
 Ere long their fates do each to each conform :

Both pass into new being,—but the Worm
Transfigured, sinks into a hopeless grave;
His volant Spirit will, he trusts, ascend
To bliss unbounded, glory without end.

XXV

AFTER LEAVING ITALY

FAIR Land ! Thee all men greet with joy ; how few
Whose souls take pride in freedom, virtue, fame,
Part from thee without pity dyed in shame :
I could not—while from Venice we withdrew,
Led on till an Alpine strait confined our view
Within its depths, and to the shore we came
Of Lago Morto, dreary sight and name,
Which o'er sad thoughts a sadder colouring threw,
Italia ! on the surface of thy spirit,
(Too aptly emblemed by that torpid lake)
Shall a few partial breezes only creep ?—
Be its depths quickened ; what thou dost inherit
Of the world's hopes, dare to fulfil ; awake,
Mother of Heroes, from thy death-like sleep !

XXVI

CONTINUED

As indignation mastered grief, my tongue
Spake bitter words ; words that did ill agree
With those rich stores of Nature's imagery,
And divine Art, that fast to memory clung—
Thy gifts, magnificent Region, ever young
In the sun's eye, and in his sister's sight
How beautiful ! how worthy to be sung
In strains of rapture, or subdued delight !
I feign not ; witness that unwelcome shock
That followed the first sound of German speech,
Caught the far-winding barrier Alps among.
In that announcement, greeting seemed to mock
Parting ; the casual word had power to reach
My heart, and filled that heart with conflict strong.

AT BOLOGNA, IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE
LATE INSURRECTIONS, 1837

I

Ah why deceive ourselves ! by no mere fit
Of sudden passion roused shall men attain

True freedom where for ages they have lain
 Bound in a dark abominable pit,
 With life's best sinews more and more unknit.
 Here, there, a banded few who loathe the chain
 May rise to break it ; effort worse than vain
 For thee, O great Italian nation, split
Into those jarring fractions.—*Let thy scope*
 Be one fixed mind for all ; thy rights approve
 To thy own conscience gradually renewed ;
 Learn to make Time the father of wise Hope ;
 Then trust thy cause to the arm of Fortitude,
 The light of Knowledge, and the warmth of Love.

HARD task ! exclaim the undisciplined, to lean
 On Patience coupled with such slow endeavour,
 That long-lived servitude must last for ever.
 Perish the grovelling few, who, prest between
 Wrongs and the terror of redress, would wean
 Millions from glorious aims. Our chains to sever
 Let us break forth in tempest now or never !—
 What, is there then no space for golden mean
 And gradual progress ?—Twilight leads to day,
 And, even within the burning zones of earth,
 The hastiest sunrise yields a temperate ray ;
 The softest breeze to fairest flowers gives birth :
 Think not that Prudence dwells in dark abodes,
 She scans the future with the eye of gods.

III

As leaves are to the tree whereon they grow
 And wither, every human generation
 Is, to the Being of a mighty nation,
 Locked in our world's embrace through weal and woe ;
 Thought that should teach the zealot to forego
 Rash schemes, to abjure all selfish agitation,
 And seek through noiseless pains and moderation
 The unblemished good they only can bestow.
 Alas ! with most, who weigh futurity
 Against time present, passion holds the scales :
 Hence equal ignorance of both prevails,
 And nations sink ; or, struggling to be free,
 Are doomed to flounder on, like wounded whales
 Tossed on the bosom of a stormy sea.

"WHAT IF OUR NUMBERS BARELY COULD
DEFY"

WHAT if our numbers barely could defy
The arithmetic of babes, must foreign hordes,
Slaves, vile as ever were befooled by words,
Striking through English breasts the anarchy
Of Terror, bear us to the ground, and tie
Our hands behind our backs with felon cords?
Yields every thing to discipline of swords?
Is man as good as man, none low, none high?—
Nor discipline nor valour can withstand
The shock, nor quell the inevitable rout,
When in some great extremity breaks out
A people, on their own beloved Land
Risen, like one man, to combat in the sight
Of a just God for liberty and right.

(1837)

A NIGHT THOUGHT

Lo ! where the Moon along the sky
Sails with her happy destiny ;
Oft is she hid from mortal eye
Or dimly seen,
But when the clouds asunder fly
How bright her mien !
Far different we—a froward race,
Thousands though rich in Fortune's grace
With cherished sullenness of pace
Their way pursue,
Ingrates who wear a smileless face
The whole year through.
If kindred humours e'er would make
My spirit droop for drooping's sake,
From fancy following in thy wake,
Bright ship of heaven !
A counter impulse let me take
And be forgiven.

(1837)

TO THE PLANET VENUS¹

WHAT strong allurements draws, what spirit guides,
Thee, Vesper ! brightening still, as if the nearer

¹ Upon its approximation (as an Evening Star) to the Earth, Jan.

Thou com'st to man's abode the spot grew dearer
 Night after night? True is it Nature hides
 Her treasures less and less.—Man now presides
 In power, where once he trembled in his weakness;
 Science advances with gigantic strides;
 But are we aught enriched in love and meekness?
 Aught dost thou see, bright Star! of pure and wise
 More than in humbler times graced human story;
 That makes our hearts more apt to sympathise
 With heaven, our souls more fit for future glory,
 When earth shall vanish from our closing eyes,
 Ere we lie down in our last dormitory?
 (1838)

COMPOSED AT RYDAL ON MAY MORNING

1838¹

If with old love of you, dear Hills! I share
 New love of many a rival image brought
 From far, forgive the wanderings of my thought:
 Nor art thou wronged, sweet May! when I compare
 Thy present birth-morn with thy last, so fair,
 So rich to me in favours. For my lot
 Then was, within the famed Egerian Grot
 To sit and muse, fanned by its dewy air
 Mingling with thy soft breath! That morning too,
 Warblers I heard their joy unbosoming
 Amid the sunny, shadowy, Colyseum;
 Heard them, unchecked by aught of saddening hue,
 For victories there won by flower-crowned Spring,
 Chant in full choir their innocent Te Deum.

COMPOSED ON A MAY MORNING, 1838

LIFE with yon Lambs, like day, is just begun,
 Yet Nature seems to them a heavenly guide.
 Does joy approach? they meet the coming tide;
 And sullenness avoid, as now they shun
 Pale twilight's lingering glooms,—and in the sun
 Couch near their dams, with quiet satisfied;
 Or gambol—each with his shadow at his side,
 Varying its shape wherever he may run.
 As they from turf yet hoar with sleepy dew
 All turn, and court the shining and the green,

¹ Composed on what we call the "Far Terrace" at Rydal Mount, where I have murmured out many thousands of verses.

Where herbs look up, and opening flowers are seen ;
Why to God's goodness cannot We be true,
And so, His gifts and promises between,
Feed to the last on pleasures ever new ?

"HARK! 'TIS THE THRUSH"

HARK! 'tis the Thrush, undaunted, undeprest.
By twilight premature of cloud and rain ;
Nor does that roaring wind deaden his strain
Who carols thinking of his Love and nest,
And seems, as more incited, still more blest.
Thanks ; thou hast snapped a fireside Prisoner's chain,
Exulting Warbler! eased a fretted brain,
And in a moment charmed my cares to rest.
Yes, I will forth, bold Bird! and front the blast,
That we may sing together, if thou wilt,
So loud, so clear, my Partner through life's day,
Mute in her nest love-chosen, if not love-built
Like thine, shall gladden, as in seasons past,
Thrilled by loose snatches of the social Lay.

(RYDAL MOUNT, 1838)

"'TIS HE WHOSE YESTER-EVENING'S HIGH
DISDAIN"

'Tis He whose yester-evening's high disdain
Beat back the roaring storm—but how subdued
His day-break note, a sad vicissitude!
Does the hour's drowsy weight his glee restrain?
Or, like the nightingale, her joyous vein
Pleased to renounce, does this dear Thrush attune
His voice to suit the temper of yon Moon
Doubly depressed, setting, and in her wane?
Rise, tardy Sun! and let the Songster prove
(The balance trembling between night and morn
No longer) with what ecstasy upborne
He can pour forth his spirit. In heaven above,
And earth below, they best can serve true gladness
Who meet most feelingly the calls of sadness.

(1838)

"OH WHAT A WRECK!"¹

OH what a Wreck! how changed in mien and speech!
Yet—though dread Powers, that work in mystery, spin

¹ The sad condition of poor M^{rs}. Southey put me upon writing this. It has afforded comfort to many persons whose friends have been similarly affected.

Entanglings of the brain ; though shadows stretch
 O'er the chilled heart—reflect ; far, far within
 Hers is a holy Being, freed from Sin.
 She is not what she seems, a forlorn wretch ;
 But delegated Spirits comfort fetch
 To Her from heights that Reason may not win.
 Like Children, She is privileged to hold
 Divine communion ; both do live and move,
 Whate'er to shallow Faith their ways unfold,
 Inly illumined by Heaven's pitying love ;
 Love pitying innocence not long to last,
 In them—in Her our sins and sorrows past.
 (1838)

A PLEA FOR AUTHORS, MAY 1838

FAILING impartial measure to dispense
 To every suitor, Equity is lame ;
 And social Justice, stript of reverence
 For natural rights, a mockery and a shame ;
 Law but a servile dupe of false pretence,
 If, guarding grossest things from common claim
 Now and for ever, She, to works that came
 From mind and spirit, grudge a short-lived fence.
 "What ! lengthened privilege, a lineal tie,
 For *Books !*" Yes, heartless Ones, or be it proved
 That 'tis a fault in Us to have lived and loved
 Like others, with like temporal hopes to die ;
 No public harm that Genius from her course
 Be turned ; and streams of truth dried up, even at their source!

A POET TO HIS GRANDCHILD

SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING

"SON of my buried Son, while thus thy hand
 Is clasping mine, it saddens me to think
 How Want may press thee down, and with thee sink
 Thy children left unfit, through vain demand
 Of culture, even to feel or understand
 My simplest Lay that to their memory
 May cling ;—hard fate ! which haply need not be
 Did Justice mould the statutes of the Land.
 A Book time-cherished and an honoured name
 Are high rewards ; but bound they Nature's claim
 Or Reason's ? No—hopes spun in timid line
 From out the bosom of a modest home

Extend through unambitious years to come,
My careless Little-one, for thee and thine !"
(May 23, 1838)

"BLEST STATESMAN HE, WHOSE MIND'S
UNSELFISH WILL"

BLEST Statesman He, whose Mind's unselfish will
Leaves him at ease among grand thoughts : whose eye
Sees that, apart from magnanimity,
Wisdom exists not ; nor the humbler skill
Of Prudence, disentangling good and ill
With patient care. What tho' assaults run high,
They daunt not him who holds his ministry,
Resolute, at all hazards, to fulfil
Its duties ;—prompt to move, but firm to wait,—
Knowing, things rashly sought are rarely found ;
That, for the functions of an ancient State—
Strong by her charters, free because imbound,
Servant of Providence, not slave of Fate—
Perilous is sweeping change, all chance unsound.
(1838)

VALEDICTORY SONNET ¹

SERVING no haughty Muse, my hands have here
Disposed some cultured Flowerets (drawn from spots
Where they bloomed singly, or in scattered knots),
Each kind in several beds of one parterre ;
Both to allure the casual Loiterer,
And that, so placed, my Nurslings may requite
Studious regard with opportune delight,
Nor be unthanked, unless I fondly err.
But metaphor dismissed, and thanks apart,
Reader, farewell ! My last words let them be—
If in this book Fancy and Truth agree ;
If simple Nature trained by careful Art
Through It have won a passage to thy heart ;
Grant me thy love, I crave no other fee !
(1838)

PROTEST AGAINST THE BALLOT

FORTH rushed from Envy sprung and Self-conceit,
A Power misnamed the SPIRIT of REFORM,
And through the astonished Island swept in storm,
Threatening to lay all orders at her feet

¹ Closing the Volume of Sonnets published in 1838.

That crossed her way. Now stoops she to entreat
 Licence to hide at intervals her head
 Where she may work, safe, undisquieted,
 In a close Box, covert for Justice meet.
 St. George of England! keep a watchful eye
 Fixed on the Suitor; frustrate her request—
 Stifle her hope; for, if the State comply,
 From such Pandorian gift may come a Pest
 Worse than the Dragon that bowed low his crest,
 Pierced by thy spear in glorious victory.

(1838)

INSCRIPTION ON A ROCK AT RYDAL MOUNT

WOULDST thou be gathered to Christ's chosen flock,
 Shun the broad way too easily explored,
 And let thy path be hewn out of the Rock,
 The living Rock of God's Eternal Word.

(1838)

SONNETS UPON THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH

1839

I

SUGGESTED BY THE VIEW OF LANCASTER CASTLE (ON THE
 ROAD FROM THE SOUTH)

THIS Spot—at once unfolding sight so fair
 Of sea and land, with yon grey towers that still
 Rise up as if to lord it over air—
 Might soothe in human breasts the sense of ill,
 Or charm it out of memory; yea, might fill
 The heart with joy and gratitude to God
 For all his bounties upon man bestowed:
 Why bears it then the name of "Weeping Hill"?
 Thousands, as toward yon old Lancastrian Towers,
 A prison's crown, along this way they past
 For lingering durance or quick death with shame,
 From this bare eminence thereon have cast
 Their first look—blinded as tears fell in showers
 Shed on their chains; and hence that doleful name.

"TENDERLY DO WE FEEL BY NATURE'S LAW"

TENDERLY do we feel by Nature's law
 For worst offenders: though the heart will heave
 With indignation, deeply moved we grieve,
 In after thought, for Him who stood in awe

Neither of God nor man, and only saw,
Lost wretch, a horrible device enthroned
On proud temptations, till the victim groaned
Under the steel his hand had dared to draw.
But oh, restrain compassion, if its course,
As oft befalls, prevent or turn aside
Judgments and aims and acts whose higher source
Is sympathy with the unforewarned, who died
Blameless—with them that shuddered o'er his grave,
And all who from the law firm safety crave.

III

‘THE ROMAN CONSUL DOOMED HIS SONS TO DIE’

THE Roman Consul doomed his sons to die
Who had betrayed their country. The stern word
Afforded (may it through all time afford)
A theme for praise and admiration high.
Upon the surface of humanity
He rested not ; its depths his mind explored ;
He felt ; but his parental bosom's lord
Was Duty,—Duty calmed his agony.
And some, we know, when they by wilful act
A single human life have wrongly taken,
Pass sentence on themselves, confess the fact,
And, to atone for it, with soul unshaken
Kneel at the feet of Justice, and, for faith
Broken with all mankind, solicit death.

IV

“IS DEATH, WHEN EVIL AGAINST GOOD HAS FOUGHT”

Is *Death*, when evil against good has fought
With such fell mastery that a man may dare
By deeds the blackest purpose to lay bare ?
Is Death, for one to that condition brought,
For him, or any one, the thing that ought
To be *most* dreaded ? Lawgivers, beware,
Lest, capital pains remitting till ye spare
The murderer, ye, by sanction to that thought
Seemingly given, debase the general mind ;
Tempt the vague will tried standards to disown,
Nor only palpable restraints unbind,
But upon Honour's head disturb the crown,
Whose absolute rule permits not to withstand
In the weak love of life his least command

V

"NOT TO THE OBJECT SPECIALLY DESIGNED"

NOT to the object specially designed,
 Howe'er momentous in itself it be,
 Good to promote or curb depravity,
 Is the wise Legislator's view confined.
 His Spirit, when most severe, is oft most kind ;
 As all Authority in earth depends
 On Love and Fear, their several powers he blends,
 Copying with awe the one Paternal mind.
 Uncaught by processes in show humane,
 He feels how far the act would derogate
 From even the humblest functions of the State ,
 If she, self-shorn of Majesty, ordain
 That never more shall hang upon her breath
 The last alternative of Life or Death.

VI

"YE BROOD OF CONSCIENCE—SPECTRES ! THAT FREQUENT"

YE brood of conscience—Spectres ! that frequent
 The bad Man's restless walk, and haunt his bed—
 Fiends in your aspect, yet beneficent
 In act, as hovering Angels when they spread
 Their wings to guard the unconscious Innocent—
 Slow be the Statutes of the land to share
 A laxity that could not but impair
 Your power to punish crime, and so prevent.
 And ye, Beliefs ! coiled serpent-like about
 The adage on all tongues, "Murder will out,"
 How shall your ancient warnings work for good
 In the full might they hitherto have shown,
 If for deliberate shedder of man's blood
 Survive not Judgment that requires his own ?

VII

"BEFORE THE WORLD HAD PAST HER TIME OF YOUTH"

BEFORE the world had past her time of youth
 While polity and discipline were weak,
 The precept eye for eye, and tooth for tooth,
 Came forth—a light, though but as of daybreak,
 Strong as could then be borne. A Master meek
 Proscribed the spirit fostered by that rule,
 Patience *his* law, long-suffering *his* school,
 And love the end, which all through peace must seek.

But lamentably do they err who strain
 His mandates, given rash impulse to control
 And keep vindictive thirstings from the soul,
 So far that, if consistent in their scheme,
 They must forbid the State to inflict a pain,
 Making of social order a mere dream.

VIII

"FIT RETRIBUTION, BY THE MORAL CODE"

FIT retribution, by the moral code
 Determined, lies beyond the State's embrace,
 Yet, as she may, for each peculiar case
 She plants well-measured terrors in the road
 Of wrongful acts. Downward it is and broad,
 And, the main fear once doomed to banishment,
 Far oftener then, bad ushering worse event,
 Blood would be spilt that in his dark abode
 Crime might lie better hid. And, should the change
 Take from the horror due to a foul deed,
 Pursuit and evidence so far must fail,
 And, guilt escaping, passion then might plead
 In angry spirits for her old free range,
 And the "wild justice of revenge" prevail.

IX

"THOUGH TO GIVE TIMELY WARNING AND DETER"

THOUGH to give timely warning and deter
 Is one great aim of penalty, extend
 Thy mental vision further and ascend
 Far higher, else full surely shalt thou err.
 What is a State? The wise behold in her
 A creature born of time, that keeps one eye
 Fixed on the statutes of Eternity,
 To which her judgments reverently defer.
 Speaking through Law's dispassionate voice the State
 Endues her conscience with external life
 And being, to preclude or quell the strife
 Of individual will, to elevate
 The grovelling mind, the erring to recall,
 And fortify the moral sense of all.

X

"OUR BODILY LIFE, SOME PLEAD, THAT LIFE THE SHRINE"

OUR bodily life, some plead, that life the shrine
 Of an immortal spirit, is a gift
 So sacred, so informed with light divine,

That no tribunal, though most wise to sift
 Deed and intent, should turn the Being adrift
 Into that world where penitential tear
 May not avail, nor prayer have for God's ear
 A voice—that world whose veil no hand can lift
 For earthly sight. "Eternity and Time,"
They urge, "have interwoven claims and rights
 Not to be jeopardised through foulest crime :
 The sentence rule by mercy's heaven-born lights."
 Even so ; but measuring not by finite sense
 Infinite Power, perfect Intelligence.

XI

"AH, THINK HOW ONE COMPELLED FOR LIFE TO ABIDE"

AH, think how one compelled for life to abide
 Locked in a dungeon needs must eat the heart
 Out of his own humanity, and part
 With every hope that mutual cares provide ;
 And, should a less unnatural doom confide
 In life-long exile on a savage coast,
 Soon the relapsing penitent may boast
 Of yet more heinous guilt, with fiercer pride.
 Hence thoughtful Mercy, Mercy sage and pure,
 Sanctions the forfeiture that Law demands,
 Leaving the final issue in *His* hands
 Whose goodness knows no change, whose love is sure,
 Who sees, foresees ; who cannot judge amiss,
 And wafts at will the contrite soul to bliss.

XII

"SEE THE CONDEMNED ALONE WITHIN HIS CELL"

SEE the Condemned alone within his cell
 And prostrate at some moment when remorse
 Stings to the quick, and, with resistless force,
 Assaults the pride she strove in vain to quell.
 Then mark him, him who could so long rebel,
 The crime confessed, a kneeling Penitent
 Before the Altar, where the Sacrament
 Softens his heart, till from his eyes outwell
 Tears of salvation. Welcome death ! while Heaven
 Does in this change exceedingly rejoice ;
 While yet the solemn heed the State hath given
 Helps him to meet the last Tribunal's voice
 In faith, which fresh offences, were he cast
 On old temptations, might for ever blast.

On a Portrait of I. F. 641

XIII

CONCLUSION

Yes, though He well may tremble at the sound
Of his own voice, who from the judgment-seat
Sends the pale Convict to his last retreat
In death ; though Listeners shudder all around,
They know the dread requital's source profound ;
Nor is, they feel, its wisdom obsolete—
(Would that it were !) the sacrifice unmeet
For Christian Faith. But hopeful signs abound ;
The social rights of man breathe purer air,
Religion deepens her preventive care ;
Then, moved by needless fear of past abuse,
Strike not from Law's firm hand that awful rod,
But leave it thence to drop for lack of use :
Oh, speed the blessed hour, Almighty God !

XIV

APOLOGY

THE formal World relaxes her cold chain
For One who speaks in numbers ; ampler scope
His utterance finds ; and, conscious of the gain,
Imagination works with bolder hope
The cause of grateful reason to sustain ;
And, serving Truth, the heart more strongly beats
Against all barriers which his labour meets
In lofty place, or humble Life's domain.
Enough ;—before us lay a painful road,
And guidance have I sought in duteous love
From Wisdom's heavenly Father. Hence hath flowed
Patience, with trust that, whatsoe'er the way
Each takes in this high matter, all may move
Cheered with the prospect of a brighter day.

ON A PORTRAIT OF I. F., PAINTED BY MARGARET GILLIES

WE gaze—nor grieve to think that we must die,
But that the precious love this friend hath sown
Within our hearts, the love whose flower hath blown
Bright as if heaven were ever in its eye,
Will pass so soon from human memory ;
And not by strangers to our blood alone,
But by our best descendants be unknown,
Unthought of—this may surely claim a sigh.

Yet, blessed Art, we yield not to dejection ;
 Thou against Time so feelingly dost strive.
 Where'er, preserved in this most true reflection,
 An image of her soul is kept alive,
 Some lingering fragrance of the pure affection,
 Whose flower with us will vanish, must survive.
 (RYDAL MOUNT, *New Year's Day*, 1840)

TO I. F.

THE star which comes at close of day to shine
 More heavenly bright than when it leads the morn,
 Is friendship's emblem, whether the forlorn
 She visiteth, or, shedding light benign
 Through shades that solemnise Life's calm decline,
 Doth make the happy happier. This have we
 Learnt, Isabel, from thy society,
 Which now we too unwillingly resign
 Though for brief absence. But farewell ! the page
 Glimmers before my sight through thankful tears,
 Such as start forth, not seldom, to approve
 Our truth, when we, old yet unchilled by age,
 Call thee, though known but for a few fleet years,
 The heart-affianced sister of our love !
 (RYDAL MOUNT, *Feb.* 1840)

POOR ROBIN¹

Now when the primrose makes a splendid show,
 And lilies face the March-winds in full blow,
 And humbler growths as moved with one desire
 Put on, to welcome spring, their best attire,
 Poor Robin² is yet flowerless ; but how gay
 With his red stalks upon this sunny day !
 And, as his tufts of leaves he spreads, content
 With a hard bed and scanty nourishment,
 Mixed with the green, some shine not lacking power
 To rival summer's brightest scarlet flower ;

¹ I often ask myself what will become of Rydal Mount after our day. Will the old walls and steps remain in front of the house and about the grounds, or will they be swept away with all the beautiful mosses and ferns and wild geraniums and other flowers which their rude construction suffered and encouraged to grow among them?—This little wild flower—"Poor Robin"—is here constantly counting my attention, and exciting what may be called a domestic interest with the varying aspects of its stalks and leaves and flowers.

² The small wild *Geranium* known by that name.

On Portrait of Duke of Wellington 643

And flowers they well might seem to passers-by
If looked at only with a careless eye ;
Flowers—or a richer produce (did it suit
The season) sprinklings of ripe strawberry fruit.
But while a thousand pleasures come unsought,
Why fix upon his wealth or want a thought ?
Is the string touched in prelude to a lay
Of pretty fancies that would round him play
When all the world acknowledged elfin sway ?
Or does it suit our humour to commend
Poor Robin as a sure and crafty friend,
Whose practice teaches, spite of names to show
Bright colours whether they deceive or no ?—
Nay, we would simply praise the free goodwill
With which, though slighted, he, on naked hill
Or in warm valley, seeks his part to fill ;
Cheerful alike if bare of flowers as now,
Or when his tiny gems shall deck his brow :
Yet more, we wish that men by men despised,
And such as lift their foreheads overprized,
Should sometimes think, where'er they chance to spy
This child of Nature's own humility,
What recompence is kept in store or left
For all that seem neglected or bereft ;
With what nice care equivalents are given,
How just, how bountiful, the hand of Heaven.

(*March 1840*)

ON A PORTRAIT OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON UPON THE FIELD OF WATERLOO, BY HAYDON ¹

By Art's bold privilege Warrior and Warhorse stand
On ground yet strewn with their last battle's wreck ;
Let the Steed glory while his Master's hand
Lies fixed for ages on his conscious neck ;
But by the Chieftain's look, though at his side
Hangs that day's treasured sword, how firm a check
Is given to triumph and all human pride !
Yon trophied Mound shrinks to a shadowy speck
In his calm presence ! Him the mighty deed
Elates not, brought far nearer the grave's rest,
As shows that time-worn face, for he such seed
Has sown as yields, we trust, the fruit of fame

¹ Composed while I was ascending Helvellyn in company with my daughter and her husband.

In Heaven ; hence no one blushes for thy name,
 Conqueror, 'mid some sad thoughts, divinely blest !
 (1840)

TO A PAINTER¹

ALL praise the Likeness by thy skill portrayed ;
 But 'tis a fruitless task to paint for me,
 Who, yielding not to changes Time has made,
 By the habitual light of memory see
 Eyes unbedimmed, see bloom that cannot fade,
 And smiles that from their birth-place ne'er shall flee
 Into the land where ghosts and phantoms be ;
 And, seeing this, own nothing in its stead.
 Couldst thou go back into far-distant years,
 Or share with me, fond thought ! that inward eye,
 Then, and then only, Painter ! could thy Art
 The visual powers of Nature satisfy,
 Which hold, whate'er to common sight appears,
 Their sovereign empire in a faithful heart.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT

THOUGH I beheld at first with blank surprise
 This Work, I now have gazed on it so long
 I see its truth with unreluctant eyes ;
 O, my Belovèd ! I have done thee wrong,
 Conscious of blessedness, but, whence it sprung,
 Ever too heedless, as I now perceive :
 Morn into noon did pass, noon into eve,
 And the old day was welcome as the young,
 As welcome, and as beautiful—in sooth
 More beautiful, as being a thing more holy :
 Thanks to thy virtues, to the eternal youth
 Of all thy goodness, never melancholy ;
 To thy large heart and humble mind, that cast
 Into one vision, future, present, past.
 (1841)

“WHEN SEVERN'S SWEEPING FLOOD”

WHEN Severn's sweeping flood had overthrown
 St Mary's Church, the preacher then would cry :—

¹ The picture which gave occasion to this and the following Sonnet was from the pencil of Miss M. Gillies, who resided for several weeks under our roof at Rydal Mount.

'Intent on Gathering Wool' 645

"Thus, Christian people, God his might hath shown
That ye to him your love may testify ;
Haste, and rebuild the pile."—But not a stone
Resumed its place. Age after age went by,
And Heaven still lacked its due, though piety
In secret did, we trust, her loss bemoan.
But now her Spirit hath put forth its claim
In Power, and Poesy would lend her voice ;
Let the new Church be worthy of its aim,
That in its beauty Cardiff may rejoice !
Oh ! in the past if cause there was for shame,
Let not our times halt in their better choice.
(RYDAL MOUNT, *Jan.* 23, 1842)

"INTENT ON GATHERING 'WOOL'"

INTENT on gathering wool from hedge and brake
Yon busy Little-ones rejoice that soon
A poor old Dame will bless them for the boon :
Great is their glee while flake they add to flake
With rival earnestness ; far other strife
Than will hereafter move them, if they make
Pastime their idol, give their day of life
To pleasure snatched for reckless pleasure's sake.
Can pomp and show allay one heart-born grief ?
Pains which the World inflicts can she requite ?
Not for an interval however brief ;
The silent thoughts that search for stedfast light,
Love from her depths, and Duty in her might,
And Faith—these only yield secure relief.
(*March* 8, 1842)

PRELUDE

PREFIXED TO THE VOLUME ENTITLED "POEMS CHIEFLY
OF EARLY AND LATE YEARS"¹

IN desultory walk through orchard grounds,
Or some deep chestnut grove, oft have I paused
The while a Thrush, urged rather than restrained
By gusts of vernal storm, attuned his song
To his own genial instincts ; and was heard
(Though not without some plaintive tones between)
To utter, above showers of blossom swept
From tossing boughs, the promise of a calm,

¹ Begun while I was on a visit to my son John at Brigham, and
finished at Rydal.

Which the unsheltered traveller might receive
With thankful spirit. The descant, and the wind
That seemed to play with it in love or scorn,
Encouraged and endeared the strain of words
That haply flowed from me, by fits of silence
Impelled to livelier pace. But now, my Book !
Charged with those lays, and others of like mood,
Or loftier pitch if higher rose the theme,
Go, single—yet aspiring to be joined
With thy Forerunners that through many a year
Have faithfully prepared each other's way—
Go forth upon a mission best fulfilled
When and wherever, in this changeful world,¹
Power hath been given to please for higher ends
Than pleasure only ; gladdening to prepare
For wholesome sadness, troubling to refine,
Calming to raise ; and, by a sapient Art
Diffused through all the mysteries of our Being,
Softening the toils and pains that have not ceased
To cast their shadows on our mother Earth
Since the primeval doom. Such is the grace
Which, though unsued for, fails not to descend
With heavenly inspiration ; such the aim
That Reason dictates ; and, as even the wish
Has virtue in it, why should hope to me
Be wanting that sometimes, where fancied ills
Harass the mind and strip from off the bowers
Of private life their natural pleasantness,
A Voice—devoted to the love whose seeds
Are sown in every human breast, to beauty
Lodged within compass of the humblest sight,
To cheerful intercourse with wood and field,
And sympathy with man's substantial griefs—
Will not be heard in vain ? And in those days
When unforeseen distress spreads far and wide
Among a People mournfully cast down,
Or into anger roused by venal words
In recklessness flung out to overturn
The judgment, and divert the general heart
From mutual good—some strain of thine, my Book
Caught at propitious intervals, may win
Listeners who not unwillingly admit
Kindly emotion tending to console
And reconcile ; and both with young and old
Exalt the sense of thoughtful gratitude

For benefits that still survive, by faith
 In progress, under laws divine, maintained.
 (RYDAL MOUNT, *March 26, 1842*)

"THE CRESCENT-MOON, THE STAR OF LOVE"

THE Crescent-moon, the Star of Love,
 Glories of evening, as ye there are seen
 With but a span of sky between—
 Speak one of you, my doubts remove,
 Which is the attendant Page and which the Queen?
 (1842)

"A POET! HE HATH PUT HIS HEART TO
 SCHOOL" ¹

A POET!—He hath put his heart to school,
 Nor dares to move unpropped upon the staff
 Which Art hath lodged within his hand—must laugh
 By precept only, and shed tears by rule.
 Thy Art be Nature; the live current quaff,
 And let the groveller sip his stagnant pool,
 In fear that else, when Critics grave and cool
 Have killed him, Scorn should write his epitaph.
 How does the Meadow-flower its bloom unfold?
 Because the lovely little flower is free
 Down to its root, and, in that freedom, bold;
 And so the grandeur of the Forest-tree
 Comes not by casting in a formal mould,
 But from its *own* divine vitality.
 (1842)

"THE MOST ALLURING CLOUDS THAT
 MOUNT THE SKY"

THE most alluring clouds that mount the sky
 Owe to a troubled element their forms,
 Their hues to sunset. If with raptured eye
 We watch their splendour, shall we covet storms,
 And wish the Lord of day his slow decline
 Would hasten, that such pomp may float on high?

¹ I was impelled to write this Sonnet by the disgusting frequency with which the word *artistical*, imported with other impertinences from the Germans, is employed by writers of the present day: for *artistical* let them substitute *artificial*, and the poetry written on this system, both at home and abroad, will be for the most part much better characterised.

Behold, already they forget to shine,
 Dissolve—and leave, to him who gazed, a sigh.
 Not loth to thank each moment for its boon
 Of pure delight, come whencesoe'er it may,
 Peace let us seek,—to stedfast things attune
 Calm expectations—leaving to the gay
 And volatile their love of transient bowers,
 The house that cannot pass away be ours.

“FEEL FOR THE WRONGS”

FEEL for the wrongs to universal ken
 Daily exposed, woe that unshrouded lies ;
 And seek the Sufferer in his darkest den,
 Whether conducted to the spot by sighs
 And moanings, or he dwells (as if the wren
 Taught him concealment) hidden from all eyes
 In silence and the awful modesties
 Of sorrow ;—feel for all, as brother Men !
 Rest not in hope want's icy chain to thaw
 By casual boons and formal charities ;
 Learn to be just, just through impartial law ;
 Far as ye may, erect and equalise ;
 And, what ye cannot reach by statute, draw
 Each from his fountain of self-sacrifice !
 (1842)

IN ALLUSION TO VARIOUS RECENT HISTORIES AND NOTICES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

I

PORTENTOUS change when History can appear
 As the cool Advocate of foul device ;
 Reckless audacity extol, and jeer
 At consciences perplexed with scruples nice !
 They who bewail not, must abhor, the sneer
 Born of Conceit, Power's blind Idolater ;
 Or haply sprung from vaunting Cowardice
 Betrayed by mockery of holy fear.
 Hath it not long been said the wrath of Man
 Works not the righteousness of God ? Oh bend,
 Bend, ye Perverse ! to judgments from on High,
 Laws that lay under Heaven's perpetual ban
 All principles of action that transcend
 The sacred limits of humanity.

II

Who ponders National events shall find
An awful balancing of loss and gain,
Joy based on sorrow, good with ill combined,
And proud deliverance issuing out of pain
And direful throes ; as if the All-ruling Mind,
With whose perfection it consists to ordain
Volcanic burst, earthquake, and hurricane,
Dealt in like sort with feeble human kind
By laws immutable. But woe for him
Who thus deceived shall lend an eager hand
To social havoc. Is not Conscience ours,
And Truth, whose eye guilt only can make dim ;
And Will, whose office, by divine command,
Is to control and check disordered Powers ?

III

LONG-FAVoured England ! be not thou misled
By monstrous theories of alien growth,
Lest alien frenzy seize thee, waxing wroth,
Self-smitten till thy garments reek dyed red
With thy own blood, which tears in torrents shed
Fail to wash out, tears flowing ere thy troth
Be plighted, not to ease but sullen sloth,
Or wan despair—the ghost of false hope fled
Into a shameful grave. Among thy youth,
My Country ! if such warning be held dear,
Then shall a Veteran’s heart be thrilled with joy,
One who would gather from eternal truth,
For time and season, rules that work to cheer—
Not scourge, to save the People—not destroy.

“MEN OF THE WESTERN WORLD”

MEN of the Western World ! in Fate’s dark book
Whence these opprobrious leaves of dire portent ?
Think ye your British Ancestors forsook
Their native Land, for outrage provident ;
From unsubmissive necks the bridle shook
To give, in their Descendants, freer vent
And wider range to passions turbulent,
To mutual tyranny a deadlier look ?
Nay, said a voice, soft as the south wind’s breath,
Dive through the stormy surface of the flood
To the great current flowing underneath ;
Explore the countless springs of silent good ;

So shall the truth be better understood,
And thy grieved Spirit brighten strong in faith.

“LO ! WHERE SHE STANDS ”

Lo ! where she stands fixed in a saint-like trance,
One upward hand, as if she needed rest
From rapture, lying softly on her breast !
Nor wants her eyeball an ethereal glance ;
But not the less—nay more—that countenance,
While thus illumined, tells of painful strife
For a sick heart made weary of this life
By love, long crossed with adverse circumstance.
—Would She were now as when she hoped to pass
At God’s appointed hour to them who tread
Heaven’s sapphire pavement, yet breathed well content,
Well pleased, her foot should print earth’s common grass,
Lived thankful for day’s light, for daily bread,
For health, and time in obvious duty spent.

THE NORMAN BOY¹

HIGH on a broad unfertile tract of forest-skirted Down,
Nor kept by Nature for herself, nor made by man his own,
From home and company remote and every playful joy,
Served, tending a few sheep and goats, a ragged Norman
Boy.

Him never saw I, nor the spot ; but from an English
Dame,

Stranger to me and yet my friend, a simple notice came,
With suit that I would speak in verse of that sequestered
child

Whom, one bleak winter’s day, she met upon the dreary
Wild.

His flock, along the woodland’s edge with relics sprinkled
o’er

Of last night’s snow, beneath a sky threatening the fall of
more,

Where tufts of herbage tempted each, were busy at their
feed,

And the poor Boy was busier still, with work of anxious
heed.

¹ The subject of this poem was sent me by Mrs. Ogle, to whom I was personally unknown, with a hope on her part that I might be induced to relate the incident in verse.

The Poet's Dream

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There *was* he, where of branches rent and withered and
decayed,
For covert from the keen north wind, his hands a hut had
made.

A tiny tenement, forsooth, and frail, as needs must be
A thing of such materials framed, by a builder such as he.
The hut stood finished by his pains, nor seemingly lacked
aught

That skill or means of his could add, but the architect had
wrought
Some limber twigs into a Cross, well-shaped with fingers
nice,

To be engrafted on the top of his small edifice.

The Cross he now was fastening there, as the surest power
and best

For supplying all deficiencies, all wants of the rude nest
In which, from burning heat, or tempest driving far and
wide,

The innocent Boy, else shelterless, his lonely head must
hide.

That Cross belike he also raised as a standard for the true
And faithful service of his heart in the worst that might
ensue

Of hardship and distressful fear, amid the houseless waste
Where he, in his poor self so weak, by Providence was
placed.

— Here, Lady ! might I cease ; but nay, let *us* before we
part

With this dear holy shepherd-boy breathe a prayer of earnest
heart,

That unto him, where'er shall lie his life's appointed way,
The Cross, fixed in his soul, may prove an all-sufficing
stay.

(1842)

THE POET'S DREAM

SEQUEL TO THE NORMAN BOY

Just as those final words were penned, the sun broke out
in power,
And gladdened all things ; but, as chanced, within that very
hour,
Air blackened, thunder growled, fire flashed from clouds that
hid the sky,
And, for the Subject of my Verse, I heaved a pensive sigh.

Nor could my heart by second thoughts from heaviness be
cleared,
For bodied forth before my eyes the cross-crowned hut
appeared;
And, while around it storm as fierce seemed troubling earth
and air,
I saw, within, the Norman Boy kneeling alone in prayer.
The Child, as if the thunder's voice spake with articulate
call,
Bowed meekly in submissive fear, before the Lord of All;
His lips were moving; and his eyes, upraised to sue for
grace,
With soft illumination cheered the dimness of that place.
How beautiful is holiness!—what wonder if the sight,
Almost a vivid as a dream, produced a dream at night?
It came with sleep and showed the Boy, no cherub, not
transformed,
But the poor ragged Thing whose ways my human heart had
warmed.
Me had the dream equipped with wings, so I took him in
my arms,
And lifted from the grassy floor, stilling his faint alarms,
And bore him high through yielding air my debt of love to
pay,
By giving him, for both our sakes, an hour of holiday.
I whispered, "Yet a little while, dear Child! thou art my
own,
To show thee some delightful thing, in country or in town.
What shall it be? a mirthful throng? or that holy place and
calm
St. Denis, filled with royal tombs, or the Church of Notre
Dame?
St. Ouen's golden Shrine? Or choose what else would
please thee most
Of any wonder Normandy, or all proud France, can
boast!"
"My Mother," said the Boy, "was born near to a blessed
Tree,
The Chapel Oak of Allonville; good Angel, show it me!"
On wings, from broad and steadfast poise let loose by this
reply,
For Allonville, o'er down and dale, away then did we fly;

O'er town and tower we flew, and fields in May's fresh
 verdure drest;
The wings they did not flag; the Child, though grave, was
 not deprest.

But who shall show, to waking sense, the gleam of light that
 broke
Forth from his eyes, when first the Boy looked down on that
 huge oak,
For length of days so much revered, so famous where it
 stands
For twofold hallowing—Nature's care, and work of human
 hands?

Strong as an Eagle with my charge I glided round and
 round
The wide-spread boughs, for view of door, window, and stair
 that wound
Gracefully up the gnarlèd trunk; nor left we unsurveyed
The pointed steeple peering forth from the centre of the
 shade.

I lighted—opened with soft touch the chapel's iron door,
Past softly, leading in the Boy; and, while from roof to
 floor,
From floor to roof, all round his eyes the Child with wonder
 cast,
Pleasure on pleasure crowded in, each livelier than the
 last.

For, deftly framed within the trunk, the sanctuary showed,
By light of lamp and precious stones, that glimmered here,
 there glowed,
Shrine, Altar, Image, Offerings hung in sign of gratitude;
Sight that inspired accordant thoughts; and speech I thus
 renewed:

“Hither the Afflicted come, as thou hast heard thy Mother
 say,
And, kneeling, supplication make to our Lady de la Paix;
What mournful sighs have here been heard, and, when the
 voice was stopt
By sudden pangs, what bitter tears have on this pavement
 dropt!

Poor Shepherd of the naked Down, a favoured lot is thine,
Far happier lot, dear Boy, than brings full many to this
 shrine;

The Poet's Dream

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From ^{body} pains and pains of soul thou needest no re-

^{lease,} Thy hours as they flow on are spent, if not in joy, in peace.

Then offer up thy heart to God in thankfulness and praise,
Give to Him prayers, and many thoughts, in thy most busy

days;
And in His sight the fragile Cross, on thy small hut,

will be
Holy as that which long hath crowned the Chapel of this
Tree;

Holy as that far seen which crowns the sumptuous Church
in Rome

Where thousands meet to worship God under a mighty
Dome;

He sees the bending multitude, he hears the choral rites,
Yet not the less, in children's hymns and lonely prayer
delights.

God for his service needeth not proud work of human
skill;

They please him best who labour most to do in peace his
will:

So let us strive to live, and to our Spirits will be given
Such wings as, when our Saviour calls, shall bear us up to
heaven."

The Boy no answer made by words, but, so earnest was his
look,

Sleep fled, and with it fled the dream—recorded in this
book,

Lest all that passed should melt away in silence from my
mind,

As visions still more bright have done, and left no trace
behind.

But oh! that Country-man of thine, whose eye, loved Child,
can see

A pledge of endless bliss in acts of early piety,
In verse, which to thy ear might come, would treat this
simple theme,

Nor leave untold our happy flight in that adventurous
dream.

Alas the dream, to thee, poor Boy! to thee from whom it
flowed,

Was nothing, scarcely can be aught, yet 'twas bounteously
bestowed,

The Widow on Windermere Side 655

If I may dare to cherish hope that gentle eyes will read
Not loth, and listening Little-ones, heart-touched, their
fancies feed.

(1842)

THE WIDOW ON WINDERMERE SIDE ¹

I

How beautiful when up a lofty height
Honour ascends among the humblest poor,
And feeling sinks as deep! See there the door
Of One, a Widow, left beneath a weight
Of blameless debt. On evil Fortune's spite
She wasted no complaint, but strove to make
A just repayment, both for conscience-sake
And that herself and hers should stand upright
In the world's eye. Her work when daylight failed
Paused not, and through the depth of night she kept
Such earnest vigils, that belief prevailed
With some, the noble Creature never slept;
But, one by one, the hand of death assailed
Her children from her inmost heart bewept.

The Mother mourned, nor ceased her tears to flow,
Till a winter's noonday placed her buried Son
Before her eyes, last child of many gone—
His raiment of angelic white, and lo!
His very feet bright as the dazzling snow
Which they are touching; yea far brighter, even
As that which comes, or seems to come, from heaven,
Surpasses aught these elements can show.
Much she rejoiced, trusting that from that hour
Whate'er befell she could not grieve or pine;
But the Transfigured, in and out of season,
Appeared, and spiritual presence gained a power
Over material forms that mastered reason.
Oh, gracious Heaven, in pity make her thine!

III

But why that prayer? as if to her could come
No good but by the way that leads to bliss
Through Death,—so judging we should judge amiss.
Since reason failed want is her threatened doom,

¹ The facts recorded in this Poem were given me, and the character of the person described, by my friend the Rev. R. P. Graves.

Yet frequent transports mitigate the gloom :
 Nor of those maniacs is she one that kiss
 The air or laugh upon a precipice ;
 No, passing through strange sufferings toward the tomb
 She smiles as if a martyr's crown were won :
 Oft, when light breaks through clouds or waving trees,
 With outspread arms and fallen upon her knees
 The Mother hails in her descending Son
 An Angel, and in earthly ecstasies
 Her own angelic glory seems begun.

(1842)

AIREY-FORCE VALLEY

-Not a breath of air
 Ruffles the bosom of this leafy glen.
 From the brook's margin, wide around, the trees
 Are stedfast as the rocks ; the brook itself,
 Old as the hills that feed it from afar,
 Doth rather deepen than disturb the calm
 Where all things else are still and motionless.
 And yet, even now, a little breeze, perchance
 Escaped from boisterous winds that rage without,
 Has entered, by the sturdy oaks unfelt,
 But to its gentle touch how sensitive
 Is the light ash ! that, pendent from the brow
 Of yon dim cave, in seeming silence makes
 A soft eye-music of slow-waving boughs,
 Powerful almost as vocal harmony
 To stay the wanderer's steps and soothe his thoughts.

(1842)

"LYRE ! THOUGH SUCH POWER DO IN THY
MAGIC LIVE"

LYRE ! though such power do in thy magic live
 As might from India's farthest plain
 Recall the not unwilling Maid,
 Assist me to detain
 The lovely Fugitive :
 Check with thy notes the impulse which, betrayed
 By her sweet farewell looks, I longed to aid.
 Here let me gaze enrapt upon that eye,
 The impregnable and awe-inspiring fort
 Of contemplation, the calm port
 By reason fenced from winds that sigh
 Among the restless sails of vanity.

But if no wish be hers that we should part,
A humbler bliss would satisfy my heart.

Where all things are so fair,
Enough by her dear side to breathe the air
Of this Elysian weather ;

And, on or in, or near, the brook, espy
Shade upon the sunshine lying

Faint and somewhat pensively ;

And downward Image gaily vying

With its upright living tree

'Mid silver clouds, and openings of blue sky
As soft almost and deep as her cerulean eye.

Nor less the joy with many a glance
Cast up the Stream or down at her beseeching,
To mark its eddying foam-balls prettily distrest
By ever-changing shape and want of rest ;

Or watch, with mutual teaching,

The current as it plays

In flashing leaps and stealthy creeps

Adown a rocky maze ;

Or note (translucent summer's happiest chance !)

In the slope-channel floored with pebbles bright,

Stones of all hues, gem emulous of gem,

So vivid that they take from keenest sight

The liquid veil that seeks not to hide them.

(1842)

TO THE CLOUDS¹

ARMY of Clouds ! ye wingèd Hosts in troop:
Ascending from behind the motionless brow
Of that tall rock, as from a hidden world,
Oh whither with such eagerness of speed ?
What seek ye, or what shun ye ? of the gale
Companions, fear ye to be left behind,
Or racing o'er your blue ethereal field
Contend ye with each other ? of the sea
Children, thus post ye over vale and height
To sink upon your mother's lap—and rest ?
Or were ye rightlier hailed, when first mine eyes
Beheld in your impetuous march the likeness
Of a wide army pressing on to meet

¹ Suggested while I was walking on the foot-road between Rydal Mount and Grasmere. The clouds were driving over the top of Nab-Scar across the vale : they set my thoughts agoing, and the rest followed almost immediately.

Or overtake some unknown enemy?—
 But your smooth motions suit a peaceful aim ;
 And Fancy, not less aptly pleased, compares
 Your squadrons to an endless flight of birds
 Aërial, upon due migration bound
 To milder climes ; or rather do ye urge
 In caravan your hasty pilgrimage
 To pause at last on more aspiring heights
 Than these, and utter your devotion there
 With thunderous voice? Or are ye jubilant,
 And would ye, tracking your proud lord the Sun,
 Be present at his setting ; or the pomp
 Of Persian mornings would ye fill, and stand
 Poising your splendours high above the heads
 Of worshippers kneeling to their up-risen God?
 Whence, whence, ye Clouds ! this eagerness of speed?
 Speak, silent creatures.—They are gone, are fled,
 Buried together in yon gloomy mass
 That loads the middle heaven ; and clear and bright
 And vacant doth the region which they thronged
 Appear ; a calm descent of sky conducting
 Down to the unapproachable abyss,
 Down to that hidden gulf from which they rose
 To vanish—fleet as days and months and years,
 Fleet as the generations of mankind,
 Power, glory, empire, as the world itself,
 The lingering world, when time hath ceased to be.
 But the winds roar, shaking the rooted trees,
 And see ! a bright precursor to a train
 Perchance as numerous, overpeers the rock
 That sullenly refuses to partake
 Of the wild impulse. From a fount of life
 Invisible, the long procession moves
 Luminous or gloomy, welcome to the vale
 Which they are entering, welcome to mine eye
 That sees them, to my soul that owns in them,
 And in the bosom of the firmament
 O'er which they move, wherein they are contained,
 A type of her capacious self and all
 Her restless progeny.

A humble walk
 Here is my body doomed to tread, this path,
 A little hoary line and faintly traced,
 Work, shall we call it, of the shepherd's foot
 Or of his flock?—joint vestige of them both.

I pace it unrepining, for my thoughts
 Admit no bondage and my words have wings.
 Where is the Orphean lyre, or Druid harp,
 To accompany the verse? The mountain blast
 Shall be our *hand* of music; he shall sweep
 The rocks, and quivering trees, and billowy lake,
 And search the fibres of the caves, and they
 Shall answer, for our song is of the Clouds
 And the wind loves them; and the gentle gales—
 Which by their aid re-clothe the naked lawn
 With annual verdure, and revive the woods,
 And moisten the parched lips of thirsty flowers—
 Love them; and every idle breeze of air
 Bends to the favourite burthen. Moon and stars
 Keep their most solemn vigils when the Clouds
 Watch also, shifting peaceably their place
 Like bands of ministering Spirits, or when they lie,
 As if some Protean art the change had wrought,
 In listless quiet o'er the ethereal deep
 Scattered, a Cyclades of various shapes
 And all degrees of beauty. O ye Lightnings!
 Ye are their perilous offspring; and the Sun—
 Source inexhaustible of life and joy,
 And type of man's far-darting reason, therefore
 In old time worshipped as the god of verse,
 A blazing intellectual deity—
 Loves his own glory in their looks, and showers
 Upon that unsubstantial brotherhood
 Visions with all but beatific light
 Enriched—too transient were they not renewed
 From age to age, and did not, while we gaze
 In silent rapture, credulous desire
 Nourish the hope that memory lacks not power
 To keep the treasure unimpaired. Vain thought!
 Yet why repine, created as we are
 For joy and rest, albeit to find them only
 Lodged in the bosom of eternal things?

(1842)

“WANSFELL! THIS HOUSEHOLD HAS A
 FAVOURED LOT”¹

WANSFELL! this Household has a favoured lot,
 Living with liberty on thee to gaze,

¹ The hill that rises to the south-east, above Ambleside.

660 The Eagle and the Dove

To watch while Morn first crowns thee with her rays,
 Or when along thy breast serenely float
 Evening's angelic clouds. Yet ne'er a note
 Hath sounded (shame upon the Bard!) thy praise
 For all that thou, as if from heaven, hast brought
 Of glory lavished on our quiet days.
 Bountiful Son of Earth! when we are gone
 From every object dear to mortal sight,
 As soon we shall be, may these words attest
 How oft, to elevate our spirits, shone
 Thy visionary majesties of light,
 How in thy pensive glooms our hearts found rest.

(*Dec.* 24, 1842)

THE EAGLE AND THE DOVE

SHADE of Caractacus, if spirits love
 The cause they fought for in their earthly home
 To see the Eagle ruffled by the Dove
 May soothe thy memory of the chains of Rome.
 These children claim thee for their sire; the breath
 Of thy renown, from Cambrian mountains, fans
 A flame within them that despises death
 And glorifies the truant youth of Vannes.
 With thy own scorn of tyrants they advance,
 But truth divine has sanctified their rage,
 A silver cross enchased with flowers of France
 Their badge, attests the holy fight they wage.
 The shrill defiance of the young crusade
 Their veteran foes mock as an idle noise;
 But unto Faith and Loyalty comes aid
 From Heaven, gigantic force to beardless boys.

(1842)

GRACE DARLING

AMONG the dwellers in the silent fields
 The natural heart is touched, and public way
 And crowded street resound with ballad strains,
 Inspired by ONE whose very name bespeaks
 Favour divine, exalting human love;
 Whom, since her birth on bleak Northumbria's coast,
 Known unto few but prized as far as known,
 A single Act endears to high and low
 Through the whole land—to Manhood, moved in spite
 Of the world's freezing cares—to generous Youth—

To Infancy, that lisps her praise—to Age
Whose eye reflects it, glistening through a tear
Of tremulous admiration. Such true fame
Awaits her *now* ; but, verily, good deeds
Do not imperishable record find
Save in the rolls of heaven, where hers may live
A theme for angels, when they celebrate
The high-souled virtues which forgetful earth
Has witnessed. Oh ! that winds and waves could speak
Of things which their united power called forth
From the pure depths of her humanity !
A Maiden gentle, yet, at duty's call,
Firm and unflinching, as the Lighthouse reared
On the Island-rock, her lonely dwelling-place ;
Or like the invincible Rock itself that braves,
Age after age, the hostile elements,
As when it guarded holy Cuthbert's cell.

All night the storm had raged, nor ceased, nor paused,
When, as day broke, the Maid, through misty air,
Espies far off a Wreck, amid the surf,
Beating on one of those disastrous isles—
Half of a Vessel, half—no more ; the rest
Had vanished, swallowed up with all that there
Had for the common safety striven in vain,
Or thither thronged for refuge. With quick glance
Daughter and Sire through optic-glass discern,
Clinging about the remnant of this Ship,
Creatures—how precious in the Maiden's sight !
For whom, belike, the old Man grieves still more
Than for their fellow-sufferers engulfed
Where every parting agony is hushed,
And hope and fear mix not in further strife.
“ But courage, Father ! let us out to sea—
A few may yet be saved.” The Daughter's words,
Her earnest tone, and look beaming with faith,
Dispel the Father's doubts : nor do they lack
The noble-minded Mother's helping hand
To launch the boat ; and with her blessing cheered,
And inwardly sustained by silent prayer,
Together they put forth, Father and Child !
Each grasps an oar, and struggling on they go—
Rivals in effort ; and, alike intent
Here to elude and there surmount, they watch
The billows lengthening, mutually crossed
And shattered, and re-gathering their might ;

As if the tumult, by the Almighty's will
 Were, in the conscious sea, roused and prolonged
 That woman's fortitude—so tried, so proved—
 May brighten more and more !

True to the mark,

They stem the current of that perilous gorge,
 Their arms still strengthening with the strengthening heart,
 Though danger, as the Wreck is neared, becomes
 More imminent. Not unseen do they approach :
 And rapture, with varieties of fear
 Incessantly conflicting, thrills the frames
 Of those who, in that dauntless energy,
 Foretaste deliverance ; but the least perturbed
 Can scarcely trust his eyes, when he perceives
 That of the pair—tossed on the waves to bring
 Hope to the hopeless, to the dying, life—
 One is a Woman, a poor earthly sister,
 Or, be the Visitant other than she seems,
 A guardian Spirit sent from pitying Heaven,
 In woman's shape. But why prolong the tale,
 Casting weak words amid a host of thoughts
 Armed to repel them ? Every hazard faced
 And difficulty mastered, with resolve
 That no one breathing should be left to perish.
 This last remainder of the crew are all
 Placed in the little boat, then o'er the deep
 Are safely borne, landed upon the beach,
 And, in fulfilment of God's mercy, lodged
 Within the sheltering Lighthouse.—Shout, ye Waves,
 Send forth a song of triumph. Waves and Winds,
 Exult in this deliverance wrought through faith
 In Him whose Providence your rage hath served
 Ye screaming Sea-mews, in the concert join !
 And would that some immortal Voice—a Voice
 Fitly attuned to all that gratitude
 Breathes out from floor or couch, through pallid lips
 Of the survivors—to the clouds might bear—
 Blended with praise of that parental love,
 Beneath whose watchful eye the Maiden grew
 Pious and pure, modest and yet so brave,
 Though young so wise, though meek so resolute—
 Might carry to the clouds and to the stars,
 Yea, to celestial Choirs, GRACE DARLING's name !

To Rev. Christopher Wordsworth 663

"WHILE BEAMS OF ORIENT LIGHT SHOOT
WIDE AND HIGH"

WHILE beams of orient light shoot wide and high,
Deep in the vale a little rural Town¹
Breathes forth a cloud-like creature of its own,
That mounts not toward the radiant morning sky,
But, with a less ambitious sympathy,
Hangs o'er its Parent waking to the cares,
Troubles and toils that every day prepares.
So Fancy, to the musing Poet's eye,
Endears that Lingerer. And how blest her sway
(Like influence never may my soul reject)
If the calm Heaven, now to its zenith decked
With glorious forms in numberless array,
To the lone shepherd on the hills disclose
Gleams from a world in which the saints repose.
(Jan. 1, 1843)

TO THE REV. CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH,
D.D., MASTER OF HARROW SCHOOL²

ENLIGHTENED Teacher, gladly from thy hand
Have I received this proof of pains bestowed
By Thee to guide thy Pupils on the road
That, in our native isle, and every land,
The Church, when trusting in divine command
And in her Catholic attributes, hath trod :
O may these lessons be with profit scanned
To thy heart's wish, thy labour blest by God !
So the bright faces of the young and gay
Shall look more bright—the happy, happier still ;
Catch, in the pauses of their keenest play,
Motions of thought which elevate the will
And, like the Spire that from your classic Hill
Points heavenward, indicate the end and way.
(RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 11, 1843)

INSCRIPTION

FOR A MONUMENT IN CROSTHWAITE CHURCH, IN THE VALE
OF KESWICK

YE vales and hills whose beauty hither drew
The poet's steps, and fixed him here, on you

¹ Ambleside.

² After the perusal of his *Theophilus Anglicanus*, recently published.

664 Kendal and Windermere Railway

His eyes have closed ! And ye, loved books, no more
Shall Southey feed upon your precious lore,
To works that ne'er shall forfeit their renown,
Adding immortal labours of his own—
Whether he traced historic truth, with zeal
For the State's guidance, or the Church's weal,
Or Fancy, disciplined by studious art,
Informed his pen, or wisdom of the heart,
Or judgments sanctioned in the Patriot's mind
By reverence for the rights of all mankind.
Wide were his aims, yet in no human breast
Could private feelings meet for holier rest.
His joys, his griefs, have vanished like a cloud
From Skiddaw's top ; but he to heaven was vowed
Through his industrious life, and Christian faith
Calmed in his soul the fear of change and death.
(1843)

ON THE PROJECTED KENDAL AND WINDERMERE RAILWAY

Is then no nook of English ground secure
From rash assault ? Schemes of retirement sown
In youth, and 'mid the busy world kept pure
As when their earliest flowers of hope were blown,
Must perish ;—how can they this blight endure ?
And must he too the ruthless change bemoan
Who scorns a false utilitarian lure
'Mid his paternal fields at random thrown ?
Baffle the threat, bright Scene, from Oriesthead
Given to the pausing traveller's rapturous glance :
Plead for thy peace, thou beautiful romance
Of nature ; and, if human hearts be dead,
Speak, passing winds ; ye torrents, with your strong
And constant voice, protest against the wrong.
(October 12, 1844)

“PROUD WERE YE, MOUNTAINS, WHEN, IN TIMES OF OLD”

PROUD were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old,
Your patriot sons, to stem invasive war,
Intrenched your brows ; ye gloried in each scar :
Now, for your shame, a Power, the Thirst of Gold,
That rules o'er Britain like a baneful star,
Wills that your peace, your beauty, shall be sold,

And clear way made for her triumphal car
 Through the beloved retreats your arms enfold !
 Heard ye that Whistle ? As her long-linked Train
 Swept onwards, did the vision cross your view ?
 Yes, ye were startled ;—and, in balance true,
 Weighing the mischief with the promised gain,
 Mountains, and Vales, and Floods, I call on you
 To share the passion of a just disdain.

(1844)

AT FURNESS ABBEY

HERE, where, of havoc tired and rash undoing,
 Man left this Structure to become Time's prey
 A soothing spirit follows in the way
 That Nature takes, her counter-work pursuing.
 See how her Ivy clasps the sacred Ruin
 Fall to prevent or beautify decay ;
 And, on the mouldered walls, how bright, how gay,
 The flowers in pearly dew their bloom renewing !
 Thanks to the place, blessings upon the hour ;
 Even as I speak the rising Sun's first smile
 Gleams on the grass-crowned top of yon tall Tower
 Whose cawing occupants with joy proclaim
 Prescriptive title to the shattered pile
 Where, Cavendish, *thine* seems nothing but a name !

(1844)

"FORTH FROM A JUTTING RIDGE, AROUND
WHOSE BASE"

FORTH from a jutting ridge, around whose base
 Winds our deep Vale, two heath-clad Rocks ascend
 In fellowship, the loftiest of the pair
 Rising to no ambitious height ; yet both,
 O'er lake and stream, mountain and flowery mead,
 Unfolding prospects fair as human eyes
 Ever beheld. Up-led with mutual help,
 To one or other brow of those twin Peaks
 Were two adventurous Sisters wont to climb,
 And took no note of the hour while thence they gazed,
 The blooming heath their couch, gazed, side by side,
 In speechless admiration. I, a witness
 And frequent sharer of their calm delight
 With thankful heart, to either Eminence
 Gave the baptismal name each Sister bore.
 Now are they parted, far as Death's cold hand

666 The Westmoreland Girl

Hath power to part the Spirits of those who love
As they did love. Ye kindred Pinnacles—
That, while the generations of mankind
Follow each other to their hiding-place
In time's abyss, are privileged to endure
Beautiful in yourselves, and richly graced
With like command of beauty—grant your aid
For MARY'S humble, SARAH'S silent claim,
That their pure joy in nature may survive
From age to age in blended memory.
(1845)

THE WESTMORELAND GIRL

TO MY GRANDCHILDREN

PART I

SEEK who will delight in fable
I shall tell you truth. A Lamb
Leapt from this steep bank to follow
'Cross the brook its thoughtless dam.

Far and wide on hill and valley
Rain had fallen, unceasing rain,
And the bleating mother's Young-one
Struggled with the flood in vain :

But, as chanced, a Cottage-maiden
(Ten years scarcely had she told)
Seeing, plunged into the torrent,
Clasped the Lamb and kept her hold.

Whirled adown the rocky channel,
Sinking, rising, on they go,
Peace and rest, as seems, before them
Only in the lake below.

Oh ! it was a frightful current
Whose fierce wrath the Girl had braved ;
Clap your hands with joy, my Hearers,
Shout in triumph, both are saved ;
Saved by courage that with danger
Grew, by strength the gift of love,
And belike a guardian angel
Came with succour from above.

PART II

Now, to a maturer Audience,
Let me speak of this brave Child

Left among her native mountains
With wild Nature to run wild.

So, unwatched by love maternal,
Mother's care no more her guide,
Fared this little bright-eyed Orphan
Even while at her father's side.

Spare your blame—remembrance makes him
Loth to rule by strict command ;
Still upon his cheek are living
Touches of her infant hand,

Dear caresses given in pity,
Sympathy that soothed his grief,
As the dying mother witnessed
To her thankful mind's relief.

Time passed on ; the Child was happy,
Like a Spirit of air she moved,
Wayward, yet by all who knew her
For her tender heart beloved.

Scarcely less than sacred passions,
Bred in house, in grove, and field,
Link her with the inferior creatures,
Urge her powers their rights to shield.

Anglers, bent on reckless pastime,
Learn how she can feel alike
Both for tiny harmless minnow
And the fierce and sharp-toothed pike.

Merciful protectress, kindling
Into anger or disdain ;

Many a captive hath she rescued,
Others saved from lingering pain.

Listen yet awhile ;—with patience
Hear the homely truths I tell,
She in Grasmere's old church-steeple
Tolled this day the passing-bell.

Yes, the wild Girl of the mountains
To their echoes gave the sound,
Notice punctual as the minute,
Warning solemn and profound.

She, fulfilling her sire's office,
Rang alone the far-heard knell,
Tribute, by her hand, in sorrow,
Paid to One who loved her well.

At Furness Abbey

When his spirit was departed
 On that service she went forth ;
 Nor will fail the like to render
 When his corse is laid in earth.

What then wants the Child to temper,
 In her breast, unruly fire,
 To control the froward impulse
 And restrain the vague desire ?

Easily a pious training
 And a stedfast outward power
 Would supplant the weeds and cherish,
 In their stead, each opening flower.

Thus the fearless Lamb-deliv'ier,
 Woman-grown, meek-hearted, sage,
 May become a blest example
 For her sex, of every age.

Watchful as a wheeling eagle,
 Constant as a soaring lark,
 Should the country need a heroine,
 She might prove our Maid of Arc.

Leave that thought ; and here be uttered
 Prayer that Grace divine may raise
 Her humane courageous spirit
 Up to heaven, thro' peaceful ways.

(June 6, 1845)

AT FURNESS ABBEY

WE'LL have yon Railway Labourers' to THIS ground
 Withdrawn for noontide rest. They sit, they walk
 Among the Ruins, but no idle talk
 Is heard ; to grave demeanour all are bound ;
 And from one voice a Hymn with tuneful sound
 Hallows once more the long-deserted Quire
 And thrills the old sepulchral earth, around.
 Others look up, and with fixed eyes admire
 That wide-spanned arch, wondering how it was raised,
 To keep, so high in air, its strength and grace :
 All seem to feel the spirit of the place,
 And by the general reverence God is praised :
 Profane Despoilers, stand ye not reproved,
 While thus these simple-hearted men are moved ?

(June 21, 1845)

"YES! THOU ART FAIR, YET BE NOT
MOVED"

YES! thou art fair, yet be not moved
To scorn the declaration,
That sometimes I in thee have loved
My fancy's own creation.

Imagination needs must stir;
Dear Maid, this truth believe,
Minds that have nothing to confer
Find little to perceive.

Be pleased that nature made thee fit
To feed my heart's devotion,
By laws to which all Forms submit
In sky, air, earth, and ocean.

(1845)

"WHAT HEAVENLY SMILES! O LADY MINE"

WHAT heavenly smiles! O Lady mine,
Through my very heart they shine;
And, if my brow gives back their light,
Do thou look gladly on the sight;
As the clear Moon with modest pride
Beholds her own bright beams
Reflected from the mountain's side
And from the headlong streams.

(1845)

TO A LADY

IN ANSWER TO A REQUEST THAT I WOULD WRITE HER A
POEM UPON SOME DRAWINGS THAT SHE HAD MADE
OF FLOWERS IN THE ISLAND OF MADEIRA

FAIR Lady! can I sing of flowers
That in Madeira bloom and fade,
I who ne'er sate within their bowers,
Nor through their sunny lawns have strayed?
How they in sprightly dance are worn
By Shepherd-groom or May-day queen,
Or holy festal pomps adorn,
'These eyes have never seen.

Yet tho' to me the pencil's art
No like remembrances can give,
Your portraits still may reach the heart
And there for gentle pleasure live;

While Fancy ranging with free scope
 Shall on some lovely Alien set
 A name with us endeared to hope,
 To peace, or fond regret.
 Still as we look with nicer care,
 Some new resemblance we may trace :
 A *Heart's-ease* will perhaps be there,
 A *Speedwell* may not want its place.
 And so may we, with charmed mind
 Beholding what your skill has wrought,
 Another *Star-of-Bethlehem* find,
 A new *Forget-me-not*.
 From earth to heaven with motion fleet
 From heaven to earth our thoughts will pass,
 A *Holy-thistle* here we meet
 And there a *Shepherd's weather-glass* ;
 And haply some familiar name
 Shall grace the fairest, sweetest, plant
 Whose presence cheers the drooping frame
 Of English Emigrant.
 Gazing she feels its powers beguile
 Sad thoughts, and breathes with easier breath ;
 Alas ! that meek that tender smile
 Is but a harbinger of death :
 And pointing with a feeble hand
 She says, in faint words by sighs broken,
 Bear for me to my native land
 This precious Flower, true love's last token.

(1845)

'GLAD SIGHT WHEREVER NEW WITH OLD

GLAD sight wherever new with old
 Is joined through some dear homeborn tie ;
 The life of all that we behold
 Depends upon that mystery.
 Vain is the glory of the sky,
 The beauty vain of field and grove,
 Unless, while with admiring eye
 We gaze, we also learn to love.

(1845)

LOVE LIES BLEEDING

I

You call it, "Love lies bleeding,"—so you may,
 Though the red Flower, not prostrate, only droops,

As we have seen it here from day to day,
 From month to month, life passing not away :
 A flower how rich in sadness ! Even thus stoops,
 (Sentient by Grecian sculpture's marvellous power)
 Thus leans, with hanging brow and body bent
 Earthward in uncomplaining languishment
 The dying Gladiator. So, sad Flower !
 ('Tis Fancy guides me willing to be led,
 Though by a slender thread,)
 So drooped Adonis bathed in sanguine dew
 Of his death-wound, when he from innocent air
 The gentlest breath of resignation drew ;
 While Venus in a passion of despair
 Rent, weeping over him, her golden hair
 Spangled with drops of that celestial shower.
 She suffered, as Immortals sometimes do ;
 But pangs more lasting far, *that* Lover knew
 Who first, weighed down by scorn, in some lone bower
 Did press this semblance of unpitied smart
 Into the service of his constant heart,
 His own dejection, downcast Flower ! could share
 With thine, and gave the mournful name which thou wilt
 ever bear

NEVER enlivened with the liveliest ray
 That fosters growth or checks or cheers decay,
 Nor by the heaviest rain-drops more deprest,
 This Flower, that first appeared as summer's guest,
 Preserves her beauty 'mid autumnal leaves
 And to her mournful habits fondly cleaves.
 When files of stateliest plants have ceased to bloom,
 One after one submitting to their doom,
 When her coevals each and all are fled,
 What keeps her thus reclined upon her lonesome bed ?
 The old mythologists, more impressed than we
 Of this late day by character in tree
 Or herb, that claimed peculiar sympathy,
 Or by the silent lapse of fountain clear,
 Or with the language of the viewless air
 By bird or beast made vocal, sought a cause
 To solve the mystery, not in Nature's laws
 But in Man's fortunes. Hence a thousand tales
 Sung to the plaintive lyre in Grecian vales.
 Nor doubt that something of their spirit swayed

The fancy-stricken Youth or heart-sick Maid,
 Who, while each stood companionless and eyed
 This undeparting Flower in crimson dyed,
 Thought of a wound which death is slow to cure,
 A fate that has endured and will endure,
 And, patience coveting yet passion feeding,
 Called the dejected Lingerer, *Love lies bleeding*.
 (1845)

THE CUCKOO-CLOCK

WOULDEST thou be taught, when sleep has taken flight,
 By a sure voice that can most sweetly tell,
 How far off yet a glimpse of morning light,
 And if to lure the truant back be well,
 Forbear to covet a Repeater's stroke,
 That, answering to thy touch, will sound the hour,
 Better provide thee with a Cuckoo-clock
 For service hung behind thy chamber-door;
 And in due time the soft spontaneous shock,
 The double note, as if with living power,
 Will to composure lead—or make thee blithe as bird in
 bower.

List, Cuckoo—Cuckoo!—oft tho' tempests howl,
 Or nipping frost remind thee trees are bare,
 How cattle pine, and droop the shivering fowl,
 Thy spirits will seem to feed on balmy air:
 I speak with knowledge,—by that Voice beguiled,
 Thou wilt salute old memories as they throng
 Into thy heart; and fancies, running wild
 Through fresh green fields, and budding groves among,
 Will make thee happy, happy as a child:
 Of sunshine wilt thou think, and flowers, and song,
 And breathe as in a world where nothing can go wrong.

And know—that, even for him who shuns the day
 And nightly tosses on a bed of pain;
 Whose joys, from all but memory swept away,
 Must come unhoped for, if they come again;
 Know—that, for him whose waking thoughts, severe
 As his distress is sharp, would scorn my theme,
 The mimic notes, striking upon his ear
 In sleep, and intermingling with his dream,
 Could from sad regions send him to a dear
 Delightful land of verdure, shower and gleam,
 To mock the *wandering* Voice beside some haunted stream.

O bounty without measure ! while the grace
Of Heaven doth in such wise, from humblest springs,
Pour pleasure forth, and solaces that trace
A mazy course along familiar things,
Well may our hearts have faith that blessings come,
Streaming from founts above the starry sky,
With angels when their own untroubled home
They leave, and speed on nightly embassy
To visit earthly chambers,—and for whom ?
Yea, both for souls who God’s forbearance try,
And those that seek his help, and for his mercy sigh.
(1845)

“ SO FAIR, SO SWEET ”

So fair, so sweet, withal so sensitive,
Would that the little Flowers were born to live,
Conscious of half the pleasure which they give ;
That to this mountain-daisy’s self were known
The beauty of its star-shaped shadow, thrown
On the smooth surface of this naked stone !
And what if hence a bold desire should mount
High as the Sun, that he could take account
Of all that issues from his glorious fount !
So might he ken how by his sovereign aid
These delicate companionships are made ;
And how he rules the pomp of light and shade ;
And were the Sister-power that shines by night
So privileged, what a countenance of delight
Would through the clouds break forth on human sight !
Fond fancies ! wheresoe’er shall turn thine eye
On earth, air, ocean, or the starry sky,
Converse with Nature in pure sympathy ;
All vain desires, all lawless wishes quelled,
Be Thou to love and praise alike impelled,
Whatever boon is granted or withheld.

(1845)

TO THE PENNSYLVANIANS

DAYS undefiled by luxury or sloth,
Firm self-denial, manners grave and staid,
Rights equal, laws with cheerfulness obeyed,
Words that require no sanction from an oath,
And simple honesty a common growth—
This high repute, with bounteous Nature’s aid,

Won confidence, now ruthlessly betrayed
 At will, your power the measure of your troth!—
 All who revere the memory of Penn
 Grieve for the land on whose wild woods his name
 Was fondly grafted with a virtuous aim,
 Renounced, abandoned by degenerate Men
 For state-dishonour black as ever came
 To upper air from Mammon's loathsome den.
 (1845)

“YOUNG ENGLAND”

YOUNG ENGLAND—what is then become of Old
 Of dear Old England? Think they she is dead,
 Dead to the very name? Presumption fed
 On empty air! That name will keep its hold
 In the true filial bosom's inmost fold
 For ever.—The Spirit of Alfred, at the head
 Of all who for her rights watched, toiled and bled,
 Knows that this prophecy is not too bold.
 What—how! shall she submit in will and deed
 To Beardless Boys—an imitative race,
 The *servum pecus* of a Gallic breed?
 Dear Mother! if thou *must* thy steps retrace,
 Go where at least meek Innocency dwells;
 Let Babes and Sucklings be thy oracles.
 (1845)

“THOUGH THE BOLD WINGS OF POESY”

THOUGH the bold wings of Poesy affect
 The clouds, and wheel around the mountain tops
 Rejoicing, from her loftiest height she drops
 Well pleased to skim the plain with wild flowers deckt
 Or muse in solemn grove whose shades protect
 The lingering dew—there steals along, or stops
 Watching the least small bird that round her hops,
 Or creeping worm, with sensitive respect.
 Her functions are they therefore less divine,
 Her thoughts less deep, or void of grave intent
 Her simplest fancies? Should that fear be thine,
 Aspiring Votary, ere thy hand present
 One offering, kneel before her modest shrine,
 With brow in penitential sorrow bent!
 (1845)

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF THE BIRD
OF PARADISE

THE gentlest Poet, with free thoughts endowed,
And a true master of the glowing strain,
Might scan the narrow province with disdain
That to the Painter's skill is here allowed.
This, this the Bird of Paradise ! disclaim
The daring thought, forget the name ;
This the Sun's Bird, whom Glendoveers might own
As no unworthy Partner in their flight
Through seas of ether, where the ruffling sway
Of nether air's rude billows is unknown ;
Whom Sylphs, if e'er for casual pastime they
Through India's spicy regions wing their way,
Might bow to as their Lord. What character,
O sovereign Nature ! I appeal to thee,
Of all thy feathered progeny
Is so unearthly, and what shape so fair ?
So richly decked in variegated down,
Green, sable, shining yellow, shadowy brown,
Tints softly with each other blended,
Hues doubtfully begun and ended ;
Or intershooting, and to sight
Lost and recovered, as the rays of light
Glance on the conscious plumes touched here and there ?
Full surely, when with such proud gifts of life
Began the pencil's strife,
O'erweening Art was caught as in a snare.

A sense of seemingly presumptuous wrong
Gave the first impulse to the Poet's song ;
But, of his scorn repenting soon, he drew
A juster judgment from a calmer view ;
And, with a spirit freed from discontent,
Thankfully took an effort that was meant
Not with God's bounty, Nature's love to vie,
Or made with hope to please that inward eye
Which ever strives in vain itself to satisfy,
But to recall the truth by some faint trace
Of power ethereal and celestial grace,
That in the living Creature find on earth a place.

(1845)

"WHY SHOULD WE WEEP OR MOURN?"

Why should we weep or mourn, Angelic boy,
For such thou wert ere from our sight removed,

676 'Where lies the Truth?

Holy, and ever dutiful—beloved
 From day to day with never-ceasing joy,
 And hopes as dear as could the heart employ
 In aught to earth pertaining? Death has proved
 His might, nor less his mercy, as behoved—
 Death conscious that he only could destroy
 The bodily frame. That beauty is laid low
 To moulder in a far-off field of Rome;
 But Heaven is now, blest Child, thy Spirit's home:
 When such divine communion, which we know,
 Is felt, thy Roman burial-place will be
 Surely a sweet remembrancer of Thee.
 (1846)

"WHERE LIES THE TRUTH?"

WHERE lies the truth? has Man, in wisdom's creed,
 A pitiable doom; for respite brief
 A care more anxious, or a heavier grief?
 Is he ungrateful, and doth little heed
 God's bounty, soon forgotten; or indeed,
 Must Man, with labour born, awake to sorrow
 When Flowers rejoice and Larks with rival speed
 Spring from their nests to bid the Sun good-morrow?
 They mount for rapture as their songs proclaim
 Warbled in hearing both of earth and sky;
 But o'er the contrast wherefore heave a sigh?
 Like those aspirants let us soar—our aim,
 Through life's worst trials, whether shocks or snares,
 A happier, brighter, purer Heaven than theirs.
 (1846)

"I KNOW AN AGED MAN"

I KNOW an aged Man constrained to dwell
 In a large house of public charity,
 Where he abides, as in a Prisoner's cell,
 With numbers near, alas! no company.
 When he could creep about, at will, though poor
 And forced to live on alms, this old Man fed
 A Redbreast, one that to his cottage door
 Came not, but in a lane partook his bread.
 There, at the root of one particular tree,
 An easy seat this worn-out Labourer found
 While Robin pecked the crumbs upon his knee
 Laid one by one, or scattered on the ground.

Dear intercourse was theirs, day after day ;
 What signs of mutual gladness when they met !
 Think of their common peace, their simple play,
 The parting moment and its fond regret.

Months passed in love that failed not to fulfil,
 In spite of season's change, its own demand,
 By fluttering pinions here and busy bill ;
 There by caresses from a tremulous hand.

Thus in the chosen spot a tie so strong
 Was formed between the solitary pair,
 That when his fate had housed him 'mid a throng
 The Captive shunned all converse proffered there.
 Wife, children, kindred, they were dead and gone ;
 But, if no evil hap his wishes crossed,
 One living Stay was left, and on that one
 Some recompence for all that he had lost.

Oh that the good old Man had power to prove,
 By message sent through air or visible token,
 That still he loves the Bird, and still must love ;
 That friendship lasts though fellowship is broken !

(1846)

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

I

TO LUCCA GIORDANO

GIORDANO, verily thy Pencil's skill
 Hath here portrayed with Nature's happiest grace
 The fair Endymion couched on Latmos-hill ;
 And Dian gazing on the Shepherd's face
 In rapture,—yet suspending her embrace,
 As not unconscious with what power the thrill
 Of her most timid touch his sleep would chase,
 And, with his sleep, that beauty calm and still.
 Oh may this work have found its last retreat
 Here in a Mountain-bard's secure abode,
 One to whom, yet a School-boy, Cynthia showed
 A face of love which he in love would greet,
 Fixed, by her smile, upon some rocky seat ;
 Or lured along where greenwood paths he trod.

(RYDAL MOUNT, 1846)

II

“ WHO BUT IS PLEASED TO WATCH THE MOON ON HIGH ”
 WHO but is pleased to watch the moon on high
 Travelling where she from time to time enshrouds

678 Illustrated Books and Newspapers

Her head, and nothing loth her Majesty
Renounces, till among the scattered clouds
One with its kindling edge declares that soon
Will reappear before the uplifted eye
A Form as bright, as beautiful a moon,
To glide in open prospect through clear sky.
Pity that such a promise e'er should prove
False in the issue, that yon seeming space
Of sky should be in truth the stedfast face
Of a cloud flat and dense, through which must move
(By transit not unlike man's frequent doom)
The Wanderer lost in more determined gloom.

(1846)

ILLUSTRATED BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS

DISCOURSE was deemed Man's noblest attribute,
And written words the glory of his hand ;
Then followed Printing with enlarged command
For thought—dominion vast and absolute
For spreading truth, and making love expand.
Now prose and verse sunk into disrepute
Must lacquey a dumb Art that best can suit
The taste of this once-intellectual Land.
A backward movement surely have we here,
From manhood,—back to childhood ; for the age—
Back towards caverned life's first rude career.
Avaunt this vile abuse of pictured page !
Must eyes be all in all, the tongue and ear
Nothing? Heaven keep us from a lower stage !

(1846)

"THE UNREMITTING VOICE OF NIGHTLY STREAMS"

THE unremitting voice of nightly streams
That wastes so oft, we think, its tuneful powers,
If neither soothing to the worm that gleams
Through dewy grass, nor small birds hushed in bowers,
Nor unto silent leaves and drowsy flowers,—
That voice of unpretending harmony
(For who what is shall measure by what seems
To be, or not to be,
Or tax high Heaven with prodigality?)
Wants not a healing influence that can creep
Into the human breast, and mix with sleep
To regulate the motion of our dreams
For kindly issues—as through every clime

Was felt near murmuring brooks in earliest time ;
 As at this day, the rudest swains who dwell
 Where torrents roar, or hear the tinkling knell
 Of water-breaks, with grateful heart could tell.
 (1846)

SONNET

TO AN OCTOGENARIAN

AFFECTIONS lose their object ; Time brings forth
 No successors ; and, lodged in memory,
 If love exist no longer, it must die,—
 Wanting accustomed food, must pass from earth,
 Or never hope to reach a second birth.
 This sad belief, the happiest that is left
 To thousands, share not Thou ; howe'er bereft ;
 Scorned, or neglected, fear not such a dearth.
 Though poor and destitute of friends thou art,
 Perhaps the sole survivor of thy race,
 One to whom Heaven assigns that mournful part
 The utmost solitude of age to face,
 Still shall be left some corner of the heart
 Where Love for living Thing can find a place.
 (1846)

ON THE BANKS OF A ROCKY STREAM

BEHOLD an emblem of our human mind
 Crowded with thoughts that need a settled home,
 Yet, like to eddying balls of foam
 Within this whirlpool, they each other chase
 Round and round, and neither find
 An outlet nor a resting-place !
 Stranger, if such disquietude be thine,
 Fall on thy knees and sue for help divine.
 (1846)

LINES

INSCRIBED IN A COPY OF HIS POEMS SENT TO THE QUEEN
 FOR THE ROYAL LIBRARY AT WINDSOR

DEIGN, Sovereign Mistress ! to accept a lay,
 No Laureate offering of elaborate art ;
 But salutation taking its glad way
 From deep recesses of a loyal heart . . .
 Queen, Wife and Mother ! may All-judging Heaven
 Shower with a bounteous hand on Thee and Thine
 Felicity that only can be given
 On earth to goodness blest by grace divine.

680 'How Beautiful the Queen of Night'

Lady! devoutly honoured and beloved
Through every realm confided to thy sway;
May'st thou pursue thy course by God approved,
And He will teach thy people to obey.

As thou art wont, thy sovereignty adorn
With woman's gentleness, yet firm and staid;
So shall that earthly crown thy brows have worn
Be changed for one whose glory cannot fade.

And now by duty urged, I lay this Book
Before thy Majesty, in humble trust
That on its simplest pages thou wilt look
With a benign indulgence more than just.

Nor wilt thou blame an aged Poet's prayer,
That issuing hence may steal into thy mind
Some solace under weight of royal care,
Or grief—the inheritance of humankind.

For know we not that from celestial spheres,
When Time was young, an inspiration came
(Oh were it mine!) to hallow saddest tears,
And help life onward in its noblest aim.

W. W.

(January 9th, 1846)

"HOW BEAUTIFUL THE QUEEN OF NIGHT"

How beautiful the Queen of Night, on high
Her way pursuing among scattered clouds,
Where, ever and anon, her head she shrouds
Hidden from view in dense obscurity.
But look, and to the watchful eye
A brightening edge will indicate that soon
We shall behold the struggling Moon
Break forth,—again to walk the clear blue sky.
(1846)

"READER, FAREWELL!"

READER, farewell! My last words let them be—
If in this book Fancy and Truth agree;
If simple Nature trained by careful Art
Through It have won a passage to thy heart;
Grant me thy love, I crave no other fee!

APPENDIX

A. MISCELLANEOUS EARLY AND SCATTERED VERSE

I

LINES

WRITTEN AS A SCHOOL EXERCISE AT HAWKSHEAD,
ANNO ÆTATIS 14

“AND has the Sun his flaming chariot driven
Two hundred times around the ring of heaven,
Since Science first, with all her sacred train,
Beneath yon roof began her heavenly reign ?
While thus I mused, methought, before mine eyes,
The Power of EDUCATION seemed to rise ;
Not she whose rigid precepts trained the boy
Dead to the sense of every finer joy ;
Nor that vile wretch who bade the tender age
Spurn Reason's law and humour Passion's rage :
But she who trains the generous British youth
In the bright paths of fair majestic Truth :
Emerging slow from Academus' grove
In heavenly majesty she seemed to move.
Stern was her forehead, but a smile serene
‘Softened the terrors of her awful mien.’
Close at her side were all the powers, designed
To curb, exalt, reform the tender mind :
With panting breast, now pale as winter snows,
Now flushed as Hebe, Emulation rose ;
Shame followed after with reverted eye,
And hue far deeper than the Tyrian dye ;
Last Industry appeared with steady pace,
A smile sat beaming on her pensive face.
I gazed upon the visionary train,
Threw back my eyes, returned, and gazed again.
When lo ! the heavenly goddess thus began,
Through all my frame the pleasing accents ran.

“ ‘When Superstition left the golden light
And fled indignant to the shades of night ;
When pure Religion reared the peaceful breast
And lulled the warring passions into rest,
Drove far away the savage thoughts that roll
In the dark mansions of the bigot's soul,

Enlivening Hope displayed her cheerful ray,
And beamed on Britain's sons a brighter day ;
So when on Ocean's face the storm subsides,
Hushed are the winds and silent are the tides ;
The God of day, in all the pomp of light,
Moves through the vault of heaven, and dissipates the night ;
Wide o'er the main a trembling lustre plays,
The glittering waves reflect the dazzling blaze ;
Science with joy saw Superstition fly
Before the lustre of Religion's eye ;
With rapture she beheld Britannia smile,
Clapped her strong wings, and sought the cheerful isle,
The shades of night no more the soul involve,
She sheds her beam, and, lo ! the shades dissolve ;
No jarring monks, to gloomy cell confined,
With mazy rules perplex the weary mind ;
No shadowy forms entice the soul aside,
Secure she walks, Philosophy her guide.
Britain, who long her warriors had adored,
And deemed all merit centred in the sword ;
Britain, who thought to stain the field was fame,
Now honoured Edward's less than Bacon's name.
Her sons no more in listed fields advance
To ride the ring, or toss the beamy lance ;
No longer steel their indurated hearts
To the mild influence of the finer arts ;
Quick to the secret grotto they retire
To court majestic truth, or wake the golden lyre
By generous Emulation taught to rise,
The seats of learning brave the distant skies.
Then noble Sandys, inspired with great design,
Reared Hawkshead's happy roof, and called it mine.
There have I loved to show the tender age
The golden precepts of the classic page ;
To lead the mind to those Elysian plains
Where, throned in gold, immortal Science reigns ;
Fair to the view is sacred Truth displayed,
In all the majesty of light arrayed,
To teach, on rapid wings, the curious soul
To roam from heaven to heaven, from pole to pole,
From thence to search the mystic cause of things
And follow Nature to her secret springs ;
Nor less to guide the fluctuating youth
Firm in the sacred paths of moral truth,
'To regulate the mind's disordered frame,

And quench the passions kindling into flame ;
The glimmering fires of Virtue to enlarge,
And purge from Vice's dross my tender charge.
Oft have I said, the paths of Fame pursue,
And all that Virtue dictates, dare to do ;
Go to the world, peruse the book of man,
And learn from thence thy own defects to scan ;
Severely honest, break no plighted trust,
But coldly rest not here—be more than just ;
Join to the rigours of the sires of Rome
The gentler manners of the private dome ;
When Virtue weeps in agony of woe,
Teach from the heart the tender tear to flow ;
If Pleasure's soothing song thy soul entice,
Or all the gaudy pomp of splendid Vice,
Arise superior to the Siren's power,
The wretch, the short-lived vision of an hour ;
Soon fades her cheek, her blushing beauties fly,
As fades the chequered bow that paints the sky.

So shall thy sire, whilst hope his breast inspires,
And wakes anew life's glimmering trembling fires,
Hear Britain's sons rehearse thy praise with joy,
Look up to heaven, and bless his darling boy.
If e'er these precepts quelled the passions' strife,
If e'er they smoothed the rugged walks of life,
If e'er they pointed forth the blissful way
That guides the spirit to eternal day,
Do thou, if gratitude inspire thy breast,
Spurn the soft fetters of lethargic rest.
Awake, awake ! and snatch the slumbering lyre,
Let this bright morn and Sandys the song inspire.*

" I looked obedience : the celestial Fair
Smiled like the morn, and vanished into air."
(1785)

THE BIRTH OF LOVE¹

WHEN Love was born of heavenly line,
What dire intrigues disturbed *Cythera's* joy !
Till VENUS cried, " A mother's heart is mine ;
None but myself shall nurse my boy."

¹ [From "Poems by Francis Wrangham." A translation of some anonymous French verses.—*Ed.*]

But, infant: as he was, the child
 In that divine embrace enchanted lay;
 And, by the beauty of the vase beguiled,
 Forgot the beverage—and pined away.

“And must my offspring languish in my sight?”
 (Alive to all a mother’s pain,
 The Queen of Beauty thus her court addressed)
 “No: Let the most discreet of all my train
 Receive him to her breast;
 Think all, he is the God of young delight.”

Then TENDERNESSE with CANDOUR joined,
 And GAIETY the charming office sought;
 Nor even DELICACY stayed behind:
 But none of those fair Graces brought
 Wherewith to nurse the child—and still he pined.
 Some fond hearts to COMPLIANCE seemed inclined;
 But she had surely spoiled the boy:
 And sad experience forbade a thought
 On the wild Goddess of VOLUPTUOUS JOY.

Long undecided lay the important choice,
 Till of the beauteous court, at length, a voice
 Pronounced the name of HOPE:—The conscious child
 Stretched forth his little arms and smiled.

’Tis said ENJOYMENT (who averred¹
 The charge belonged to her alone)
 Jealous that HOPE had been preferred
 Laid snares to make the babe her own.

Of INNOCENCE the garb she took,
 The blushing mien and downcast look;
 And came her services to proffer:
 And HOPE (what has not HOPE believed!)
 By that seducing air deceived,
 Accepted of the offer.

It happened that, to sleep inclined,
 Deluded HOPE for one short hour
 To that false INNOCENCE’s power
 Her little charge consigned.

The Goddess then her lap with sweetmeats filled
 And gave, in handfuls gave, the treacherous store:
 A wild delirium first the infant thrilled;
 But soon upon her breast, he sunk—to wake no more.

III

SONNET: ON SEEING MISS HELEN MARIA
WILLIAMS WEEP AT A TALE OF DISTRESS¹

SHE wept.—Life's purple tide began to flow
 In languid streams through every thrilling vein;
 Dim were my swimming eyes—my pulse beat slow,
 And my full heart was swelled to dear delicious pain
 Life left my loaded heart, and closing eye;
 A sigh recalled the wanderer to my breast;
 Dear was the pause of life, and dear the sigh
 That called the wanderer home, and home to rest.
 That tear proclaims—in thee each virtue dwells,
 And bright will shine in misery's midnight hour;
 As the soft star of dewy evening tells
 What radiant fires were drowned by day's malignant power,
 That only wait the darkness of the night
 To cheer the wandering wretch with hospitable light.

AXIOLOGUS.

IV

THE CONVICT

THE glory of evening was spread through the west;
 —On the slope of a mountain I stood,
 While the joy that precedes the calm season of rest
 Rang loud through the meadow and wood.
 “And must we then part from a dwelling so fair?”
 In the pain of my spirit I said,
 And with a deep sadness I turned, to repair
 To the cell where the convict is laid.
 The thick-ribbèd walls that o’ershadow the gate
 Resound; and the dungeons unfold:
 I pause; and at length, through the glimmering grate,
 That outcast of pity behold.
 His black matted hair on his shoulder is bent,
 And deep is the sigh of his breath,
 And with stedfast dejection his eyes are intent
 On the fetters that link him to death.
 ’Tis sorrow enough on that visage to gaze,
 That body dismissed from his care;
 Yet my fancy has pierced to his heart, and pourtrays
 More terrible images there.

¹ Published in March 1787, in “The European Magazine.”

WRITTEN IN A GROTTO¹

O MOON ! if e'er I joyed when thy soft light
 Danced to the murmuring rill on Lomond's wave,
 Or sighed for thy sweet presence some dark night,
 When thou wert hidden in thy monthly grave ;
 If e'er, on wings which active fancy gave,
 I sought thy golden vale with dancing flight,
 Then, stretcht at ease in some sequestered cave,
 Gazed on thy lovely Nymphs with fond delight,
 Thy Nymphs with more than earthly beauty bright ;
 If e'er thy beam, as Smyrna's shepherds tell,
 Soft as the gentle kiss of amorous maid
 On the closed eyes of young Endymion fell,
 That he might wake to clasp thee in the shade :
 Each night, while I recline within this cell,
 Guide hither, O sweet Moon, the maid I love so well.

VI

"I FIND IT WRITTEN OF SIMONIDES" ²

I FIND it written of Simonides
 That travelling in strange countries once he found
 A corpse that lay expiring on the ground,
 For which, with pain, he caused due obsequies
 To be performed, and paid all holy fees.
 Soon after, this man's Ghost unto him came
 And told him not to sail as was his aim,
 On board a ship then ready for the seas.
 Simonides, admonished by the ghost,
 Remained behind ; the ship the following day
 Set sail, was wrecked, and all on board was lost.
 Thus was the tenderest Poet that could be,
 Who sang in ancient Greece his loving lay,
 Saved out of many by his piety.

(1803?)

¹ "Morning Post," 1802 (attributed to Wordsworth by E. H. C. i the "Athenæum," Nov. 4, 1893).

² "Morning Post," Oct. 10, 1803.

VII

ODE ON THE INSTALLATION OF HIS ROYAL
HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT AS CHANCELLOR
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, JULY
1847 ¹

For thirst of power that Heaven disowns,
For temples, towers, and thrones,
Too long insulted by the Spoiler's shock,
Indignant Europe cast
Her stormy foe at last
To reap the whirlwind on a Libyan rock.
War is passion's basest game
Madly played to win a name ;
Up starts some tyrant, Earth and Heaven to dare,
The servile million bow ;
But will the lightning glance aside to spare
The Despot's laurelled brow ?
War is mercy, glory, fame,
Waged in Freedom's holy cause ;
Freedom, such as Man may claim
Under God's restraining laws.
Such is Albion's fame and glory :
Let rescued Europe tell the story.
But lo, what sudden cloud has darkened all
The land as with a funeral pall ?
The Rose of England suffers blight,
The flower has drooped, the Isle's delight,
Flower and bud together fall—
A Nation's hopes lie crushed in Claremont's desolate
hall.
Time a chequered mantle wears ;—
Earth awakes from wintry sleep ;
Again the Tree a blossom bears—
Cease, Britannia, cease to weep !
Hark to the peals on this bright May morn .
They tell that your future Queen is born.
A Guardian Angel fluttered
Above the Babe, unseen ;
One word he softly uttered—
It named the future Queen :

¹ [Christopher Wordsworth, the poet's nephew,
collaborated with him in this . . .

And a joyful cry through the Island rang,
 As clear and bold as the trumpet's clang,
 As bland as the reed of peace—

“VICTORIA be her name !”

For righteous triumphs are the base
 Whereon Britannia rests her peaceful fame.

Time, in his mantle's sunniest fold,
 Uplifted in his arms the child ;
 And, while the fearless Infant smiled,
 Her happier destiny foretold :—
 “ Infancy, by Wisdom mild,
 Trained to health and artless beauty ;
 Youth, by pleasure unbeguiled
 From the lore of lofty duty ;
 Womanhood is pure renown,
 Seated on her lineal throne :
 Leaves of myrtle in her Crown,
 Fresh with lustre all their own.
 Love, the treasure worth possessing,
 More than all the world beside,
 This shall be her choicest blessing,
 Oft to royal hearts denied.”

That eve, the Star of Brunswick shone
 With steadfast ray benign
 On Gotha's ducal roof, and on
 The softly flowing Leine ;
 Nor failed to gild the spires of Bonn,
 And glittered on the Rhine—
 Old Camus, too, on that prophetic night
 Was conscious of the ray ;
 And his willows whispered in its light,
 Not to the Zephyr's sway,
 But with a Delphic life, in sight
 Of this auspicious day :

This day, when Granta hails her chosen Lord,
 And proud of her award,
 Confiding in the Star serene,
 Welcomes the Consort of a happy Queen.

Prince, in these Collegiate bowers,
 Where Science, leagued with holier truth,
 Guards the sacred heart of youth,
 Solemn monitors are ours,

These reverend aisles, these hallowed towers,
Raised by many a hand august,
Are haunted by majestic Powers,
The memories of the Wise and Just,
Who, faithful to a pious trust,
Here, in the Founder's spirit sought
To mould and stamp the ore of thought
In that bold form and impress high
That best betoken patriot loyalty.
Not in vain those Sages taught,—
True disciples, good as great,
Have pondered here their country's weal,
Weighed the Future by the Past,
Learned how social frames may last,
And how a Land may rule its fate
By constancy inviolate,
Though worlds to their foundations reel
The sport of factious Hate or godless Zeal.

Albert, in thy race we cherish
A Nation's strength that will not perish
While England's sceptred Line
True to the King of Kings is found ;
Like that Wise ancestor of thine
Who threw the Saxon shield o'er Luther's life,
When first above the yells of bigot strife
The trumpet of the Living Word
Assumed a voice of deep portentous sound,
From gladdened Elbe to startled Tiber heard.

What shield more sublime
E'er was blazoned or sung?
And the PRINCE whom we greet
From its Hero is sprung.

Resound, resound the strain,
That hails him for our own !
Again, again, and yet again,
For the Church, the State, the Throne !
And that Presence fair and bright,
Ever blest wherever seen,
Who deigns to grace our festal rite,
The pride of the Islands, VICTORIA THE QUEEN.

B. POEMS BY DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

PRINTED IN HER BROTHER'S WORKS

I

THE COTTAGER TO HER INFANT¹

THE days are cold, the nights are long,
 The north-wind sings a doleful song ;
 Then hush again upon my breast ;
 All merry things are now at rest,
 Save thee, my pretty Love !

The kitten sleeps upon the hearth,
 The crickets long have ceased their mirth ;
 There's nothing stirring in the house
 Save one *wee*, hungry, nibbling mouse,
 Then why so busy thou ?

Nay ! start not at that sparkling light ;
 'Tis but the moon that shines so bright
 On the window pane bedropped with rain :
 Then, little Darling ! sleep again,
 And wake when it is day.

(1805)

II

ADDRESS TO A CHILD

DURING A BOISTEROUS WINTER EVENING

WHAT way does the Wind come ? What way does he go ?
 He rides over the water, and over the snow,
 Through wood, and through vale ; and o'er rocky height,
 Which the goat cannot climb, takes his sounding flight ;
 He tosses about in every bare tree,
 As, if you look up, you plainly may see ;
 But how he will come, and whither he goes,
 There's never a scholar in England knows.

He will suddenly stop in a cunning nook,
 And ring a sharp 'larum ;—but, if you should look,
 There's nothing to see but a cushion of snow,
 Round as a pillow, and whiter than milk,
 And softer than if it were covered with silk.
 Sometimes he'll hide in the cave of a rock,
 Then whistle as shrill as the buzzard cock ;

¹ Suggested to her while beside my sleeping children.

—Yet seek him,—and what shall you find in the place?
Nothing but silence and empty space;
Save, in a corner, a heap of dry leaves,
That he's left, for a bed, to beggars or thieves!

As soon as 'tis daylight to-morrow, with me
You shall go to the orchard, and then you will see
That he has been there, and made a great rout,
And cracked the branches, and strewn them about;
Heaven grant that he spare but that one upright twig
That looked up at the sky so proud and big
All last summer, as well you know,
Studded with apples, a beautiful show!
Hark! over the roof he makes a pause,
And growls as if he would fix his claws
Right in the slates, and with a huge rattle
Drive them down, like men in a battle:

—But let him range round; he does us no harm,
We build up the fire, we're snug and warm;
Untouched by his breath see the candle shines bright,
And burns with a clear and steady light;
Books have we to read,—but that half-stifed knell,
Alas! 'tis the sound of the eight o'clock bell.

—Come now we'll to bed! and when we are there
He may work his own will, and what shall we care?
He may knock at the door,—we'll not let him in;
May drive at the windows,—we'll laugh at his din;
Let him seek his own home wherever it be;
Here's a *cozie* warm house for Edward and me.
(1806)

III

THE MOTHER'S RETURN

A MONTH, sweet Little-ones, is past,
Since your dear Mother went away,—
And she to-morrow will return;
To-morrow is the happy day.

O blessèd tidings! thought of joy!
The eldest heard with steady glee;
Silent he stood; then laughed amain,—
And shouted, "Mother, come to me!"

Louder and louder did he shout
With witless hope to bring her near!—
"Nay, patience! patience, little boy;
Your tender mother cannot hear."

I told of hills, and far-off towns,
And long, long vales to travel through ;
He listens, puzzled, sore perplexed,
But he submits ; what can he do ?

No strife disturbs his sister's breast ;
She wars not with the mystery
Of time and distance, night and day ;
The bonds of our humanity.

Her joy is like an instinct, joy
Of kitten, bird, or summer fly ;
She dances, runs without an aim,
She chatters in her ecstasy.

Her brother now takes up the note,
And echoes back his sister's glee ;
They hug the infant in my arms,
As if to force his sympathy.

Then, settling into fond discourse,
We rested in the garden bower ;
While sweetly shone the evening sun
In his departing hour.

We told o'er all that we had done,—
Our rambles by the swift brook's side
Far as the willow-skirted pool,
Where two fair swans together glide.

We talked of change, of winter gone,
Of green leaves on the hawthorn spray,
Of birds that build their nests and sing,
And all "since Mother went away !"

To her these tales they will repeat,
To her own new-born tribes will show,
The goslings green, the ass's colt,
The lambs that in the meadow go.

—But see, the evening star comes forth !
To bed the children must depart ;
A moment's heaviness they feel,
A sadness at the heart :

'Tis gone—and in a merry fit
They run up stalis in gamesome race ;
I, too, infected by their mood,
I could have joined the wanton chase.

Loving and Liking

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Five minutes past—and, O the change!
Asleep upon their beds they lie;
Their busy limbs in perfect rest,
And closed the sparkling eye.

IV

LOVING AND LIKING¹

IRREGULAR VERSES

ADDRESSED TO A CHILD

(BY MY SISTER)

THERE'S more in words than I can teach:
Yet listen, Child!—I would not preach;
But only give some plain directions
To guide your speech and your affections.
Say not you *love* a roasted fowl,
But you may love a screaming owl.
And, if you can, the unwieldy toad
That crawls from his secure abode
Within the mossy garden wall
When evening dew begins to fall.
Oh mark the beauty of his eye:
What wonders in that circle lie!
So clear, so bright, our fathers said
He wears a jewel in his head!
And when, upon some showery day,
Into a path or public way
A frog leaps out from bordering grass,
Startling the timid as they pass,
Do you observe him, and endeavour
To take the intruder into favour;
Learning from him to find a reason
For a light heart in a dull season.
And you may love him in the pool,
That is for him a happy school,
In which he swims as taught by nature,
Fit pattern for a human creature,
Glancing amid the water bright,
And sending upward sparkling light.

Nor blush if o'er your heart be stealing
A love for things that have no feeling:
The spring's first rose by you espied,
May fill your breast with joyful pride;

¹ Written at Rydal Mount.

And you may love the strawberry-flower,
 And love the strawberry in its bower ;
 But when the fruit, so often praised
 For beauty, to your lip is raised,
 Say not you *love* the delicate treat,
 But *like* it, enjoy it, and thankfully eat.

Long may you love your pensioner mouse,
 Though one of a tribe that torment the house :
 Nor dislike for her cruel sport the cat,
 Deadly foe both of mouse and rat ;
 Remember she follows the law of her kind,
 And Instinct is neither wayward nor blind.
 Then think of her beautiful gliding form,
 Her tread that would scarcely crush a worm,
 And her soothing song by the winter fire,
 Soft as the dying throb of the lyre.

I would not circumscribe your love :
 It may soar with the eagle and brood with the dove,
 May pierce the earth with the patient mole,
 Or track the hedgehog to his hole.
 Loving and liking are the solace of life,
 Rock the cradle of joy, smooth the death-bed of strife.
 You love your father and your mother,
 Your grown-up and your baby brother ;
 You love your sister, and your friends,
 And countless blessings which God sends :
 And while these right affections play,
 You *live* each moment of your day ;
 They lead you on to full content,
 And likings fresh and innocent,
 That store the mind, the memory feed,
 And prompt to many a gentle deed :
 But *likings* come, and pass away ;
 'Tis *love* that remains till our latest day :
 Our heavenward guide is holy love,
 And will be our bliss with saints above.

(1832)

V

FLOATING ISLAND¹

HARMONIOUS Powers with Nature work
 On sky, earth, river, lake and sea ;
 Sunshine and cloud, whirlwind and breeze,
 All in one duteous task agree.

¹ Composed not long before the beginning of her sad illness.

Once did I see a slip of earth
 (By throbbing waves long undermined)
 Loosed from its hold ; how, no one knew,
 But all might see it float, obedient to the wind ,
 Might see it, from the mossy shore
 Dissevered, float upon the Lake,
 Float with its crest of trees adorned
 On which the warbling birds their pastime take.
 Food, shelter, safety, there they find ;
 There berries ripen, flowerets bloom ;
 There insects live their lives, and die ;
 A peopled world it is ; in size a tiny room.
 And thus through many seasons' space
 This little Island may survive ;
 But Nature, though we mark her not,
 Will take away, may cease to give.
 Perchance when you are wandering forth
 Upon some vacant sunny day,
 Without an object, hope, or fear
 Thither your eyes may turn—the Isle is passed away ;
 Buried beneath the glittering Lake,¹
 Its place no more to be found ;
 Yet the lost Island shall again
 'To fertilise some other ground.

(1842)

C. POEMS BY SARA AND HENRY HUTCHINSON

I

TO A REDBREAST—(IN SICKNESS)¹

STAY, little cheerful Robin ! stay,
 And at my casement sing,
 Though it should prove a farewell lay
 And this our parting spring.

Though I, alas ! may ne'er enjoy
 The promise in thy song ;
 A charm, *that* thought can not destroy,
 Doth to thy strain belong.

¹ Almost the only verses by our lamented Sister Sara Hutchinson.

Methinks that in my dying hour
Thy song would still be dear,
And with a more than earthly power
My passing Spirit cheer.

Then, little Bird, this boon confer
Come, and my requiem sing,
Nor fail to be the harbinger
Of everlasting Spring.

(1842)

BY A RETIRED MARINER, H. H.¹

FROM early youth I ploughed the restless Main,
My mind as restless and as apt to change ;
Through every clime and ocean did I range,
In hope at length a competence to gain ;
For poor to Sea I went, and poor I still remain.
Year after year I strove, but strove in vain,
And hardships manifold did I endure,
For Fortune on me never deigned to smile ;
Yet I at last a resting-place have found,
With just enough life's comforts to procure,
In a snug Cove on this our favoured Isle,
A peaceful spot where Nature's gifts abound ;
Then sure I have no reason to complain,
Though poor to Sea I went, and poor I still remain

¹ Mrs. Wordsworth's Brother Henry.

EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY

By ERNEST RHYS

"A good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit."

MILTON.

VICTOR HUGO said a Library was "an act of faith," and another writer spoke of one so beautiful, so perfect, so harmonious in all its parts, that he who made it was smitten with a passion. In that faith Everyman's Library was planned out originally on a large scale; and the idea was to make it conform as far as possible to a perfect scheme. However, perfection is a thing to be aimed at and not to be achieved in this difficult world; and since the first volumes appeared some years ago, there have been many interruptions, chief among them the Great War of 1914-18, during which even the City of Books felt a world commotion. But the series is now getting back into its old stride and looking forward to complete its scheme of a Thousand Volumes.

One of the practical expedients in the original plan was to divide the volumes into separate sections, as Biography, Fiction, History, Belles-lettres, Poetry, Philosophy, Romance, and so forth; with a shelf for Young People. Last, and not least, there was one of Reference Books, in which, beside the dictionaries and encyclopædias to be expected, there was a special set of literary and historical atlases, which have been revised from time to time, so as to chart the New Europe

and the New World at large, which we hope will preserve Kant's "Perpetual Peace" under the auspices of the League of Nations at Geneva.

That is only one small item, however, in a library list which is running on to the final centuries of its Thousand. The largest slice of this huge provision is, as a matter of course, given to the tyrannous demands of fiction. But in carrying out the scheme, publishers and editors contrived to keep in mind that books, like men and women, have their elective affinities. The present volume, for instance, will be found to have its companion books, both in the same section and just as significantly in other sections. With that idea too, novels like Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* and *Fortunes of Nigel*, Lytton's *Harold*, and Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*, have been used as pioneers of history and treated as a sort of holiday history books. For in our day history is tending to grow more documentary and less literary; and "the historian who is a stylist," as one of our contributors, the late Thomas Seccombe, said, "will soon be regarded as a kind of Phoenix."

As for history, Everyman's Library has been eclectic enough to choose its historians from every school in turn, including Gibbon, Grote, Finlay, Macaulay, Motley, and Prescott, while among earlier books may be noted the Venerable Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. On the classic shelf too, there is a Livy in an admirable new translation by Canon Roberts, and Cæsar, Tacitus, Thucydides, and Herodotus are not forgotten.

"You only, O Books," said Richard de Bury, "are liberal and independent; you give to all who ask." The variety of authors old and new, the wisdom and the wit at the disposal of Everyman in his own Library may well, at times, seem to him a little embarrassing. In the Essays, for instance, he may turn to Dick Steele in the *The Spectator* and learn how Cleomira dances, when the elegance of her motion is unimaginable and "her eyes

are chastized with the simplicity and innocence of her thoughts." Or he may take *A Century of Essays*, as a key to the whole roomful of the English Essayists, from Bacon to Addison, Elia to Augustine Birrell. These are the golden gossips of literature, the writers who have learnt the delightful art of talking on paper. Or again, the reader who has the right spirit and looks on all literature as a great adventure may dive back into the classics, and in Plato's *Phædrus* read how every soul is divided into three parts (like Cæsar's Gaul). The poets next, and we may turn to the finest critic of Victorian times, Matthew Arnold, as their showman, and find in his essay on Maurice de Guérin a clue to the "magical power of poetry," as in Shakespeare, with his

daffodils

That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty.

William Hazlitt's "Table Talk" may help again to show the relationship of one author to another, which is another form of the Friendship of Books. His incomparable essay, "On Going a Journey," forms a capital prelude to Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria;" and so throughout the long labyrinth of the Library shelves, one can follow the magic clue in prose or verse that leads to the hidden treasury. In that way every reader becomes his own critic and Doctor of Letters. In the same way one may turn to the Byron review in Macaulay's *Essays* as a prelude to the three volumes of Byron's own poems, remembering that the poet whom Europe loved more than England did was as Macaulay said: "the beginning, the middle and the end of all his own poetry." This brings us to the provoking reflection that it is the obvious authors and the books most easy to reprint which have been the signal successes out of the many hundreds in the series, for Everyman is distinctly proverbial in

his tastes. He likes best of all an old author who has worn well or a comparatively new author who has gained something like newspaper notoriety. In attempting to lead him on from the good books that are known to those that are less known, the publishers may have at times been even too adventurous. But the elect reader is or ought to be a party to this conspiracy of books and bookmen. He can make it possible, by his help and his co-operative zest, to add still some famous old authors like Burton of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, or longer novels like Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe*, a cut-and-come-again book for a winter fireside, or more modern foreign writers like Heine whom Havelock Ellis has promised to sponsor. "Infinite riches in a little room," as the saying is, will be the reward of every citizen who helps year by year to build the City of Books. It was with that belief in its possibilities that the old Chief (J. M. Dent) threw himself into the enterprise. With the zeal of a true book-lover, he thought that books might be alive and productive as dragons' teeth, which, being "sown up and down the land, might chance to spring up armed men." That is a great idea, and it means a fighting campaign in which every recruit, every new reader who buys a volume, counts.